

disincentives that hold many back, in spite of their personal efforts to get ahead.

Federal and state governments provide financial assistance to low-income families through many means-tested programs and a variety of income tax credits. Each of these benefits is income-based, and as income rises benefits are reduced through phase-outs. These reductions occur at various earnings levels and on differing schedules.

While it is appropriate for benefits to be withdrawn as family income increases, not enough thought has been given to the combined impact on behavior of these multiple phase-outs. Different programs are created within separate Congressional committees and are implemented by assorted federal and state agencies. No one entity has the authority to consider our vast system as a whole. The Commission established under this Act would be given this task and charged with the responsibility to propose a legislative package to remove the disincentives to work and marriage that these high effective marginal rates impose.

Marginal rates matter. Economists have long contended that high tax rates affect the investment decisions of affluent individuals. People at all income levels, however, respond rationally to economic incentives and disincentives. If we want people to work their way into the middle class, we need to change a system which says that if you're poor and you struggle to earn a higher income, you won't be able to keep enough of it to make it all seem really worthwhile.

I have looked at the impact these marginal rates have on a typical single mother with two children living in Wisconsin. From \$17,000 to \$40,000 in earnings, this single parent would experience combined effective marginal tax rates in excess of 50 percent—averaging 59 percent between \$24,000 and \$41,000. At lower income levels, she even approaches a rate of 100 percent. Putting this into perspective, the U.S. corporate tax rate is 35 percent (one of the highest in the industrialized world). The highest U.S. income tax rate for individuals is also 35 percent.

Thus, for every dollar of new income earned by increased effort or the acquisition of new skills, this single mother finds herself only incrementally ahead and, perhaps, wondering whether her hard work is being justly rewarded. Despite the good intentions, these programs, in effect, offer no incentive to get ahead. Rather, the incentives are backwards and low-income workers often are encouraged to stay where they are.

The same dynamic can also affect an individual's decision whether to marry. Experts from across the political divide agree that marriage is good. Government policy, however, as enacted in this assortment of programs and phase-outs actually discourages marriage among low-income couples.

Varying benefit levels across the fifty states produce different results, but in Wisconsin, for a married couple with two children, the marriage penalty starts rising from about zero at \$19,000 of combined income to \$7,000 in after-tax income at \$28,000 of combined earnings, which is what you get if two people earn minimum wage. At \$42,000, the cost of being married reaches \$8,154. That's a high price for a marriage license.

This penalty results from the high effective marginal tax rates produced by taxes and the

phase-out of various benefit programs. As income rises, taxes go up and benefits go down. The couple that has combined their lives and their income sees a steeper loss of income than does the comparable couple that has remained unmarried. If marriage is a recognized good for both society and the individual couples, then government policy should not stand in the way of people choosing to marry.

It's time that Congress rationalizes this web of programs to ensure that hard work brings rewards by removing the punishingly high effective marginal tax rates faced by low-income individuals and families.

This is why I am introducing the Making Work and Marriage Pay Act.

My bill would authorize a Commission made up of Cabinet Secretaries, Governors, and recognized policy experts to recommend solutions for the problems posed by these high effective marginal tax rates. The Commission would be constructed to achieve partisan balance, input from states offering a varying level of income support, and expert participation from government and private sector experts.

The Commission would be charged with seeking a solution along certain policy lines, but would have full authority to offer additional policy recommendations. The Commission's recommendations would be in the form of a legislative blueprint to ease consideration of its comprehensive solution by the wide range of Congressional committees.

For too long, Congress has neglected to clean up the mess of uncoordinated federal benefit programs. The Making Work and Marriage Pay Act is the first step toward a benefit structure that rewards work and effort and reflects our shared belief that marriage is the basis of stable communities. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 12, 2011

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I am submitting notice that I will not be able to attend the legislative sessions of the House of Representatives on the following dates that are currently scheduled. I will be absent from July 19 through July 22 and from August 2 through August 5 for the marriages of my daughter and my son.

HONORING THE RECIPIENTS OF THE 2011 "FORTY UNDER 40" AWARD FOR EMERGING MAINE LEADERS

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 12, 2011

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate MaineTodayMedia and the Recipients of the 2011 "Forty under 40" Award for Emerging Maine Leaders.

The "Forty under 40" Award is given annually by MaineTodayMedia to talented individuals under the age of forty who are making

significant contributions to their career field and to the community at large. The award honors Maine's emerging generation of leaders by acknowledging their achievement and recognizing their potential. These fresh faces represent the future of our state as they come to fill the big shoes left by Maine's historic line of leaders.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize these distinguished individuals by name:

Wendy Ayotte, Jeff Badger, Josh Broder, Rob Brown, Kevin Bunker, Adam Burk, Lindsay Cadawallader, Michael Carey, Eric Conlon, Josh Davis, Gibson Fay-LeBlanc, Chelsea Fournier, Ben Fowlie, David Gulak, Shannon Haines, Erik Hayward, David Herring, Jr., Geoffrey Iacussa, Drew Johnson, Charlie Longo.

Becky McKinnell, Corey Norman, Amanda O'Brien, Robert O'Brien, Shirar Patterson, Marc Pitman, Monica Quimby, Erica Quin-Easter, Brian Rayback, Jeremy Reynolds, Steve Sawczyn, Matthew Siegel, MD, Andrew Sigfridson, Liz Smith, Andrew Tenenbaum, Jesse Thompson, Scott Townsend, Jenna Vendil, Sean Wilkinson, Megan Williams.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating all the recipients of the 2011 "Forty under 40" Award for Emerging Maine Leaders and in thanking MaineTodayMedia for shining the spotlight on these outstanding individuals.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 12, 2011

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, today our national debt is \$14,342,977,065,892.73.

On January 6, 2009, the start of the 111th Congress, the national debt was \$10,638,425,746,293.80.

This means the national debt has increased by \$3,704,551,319,598.93 since then.

This debt and its interest payments we are passing to our children and all future Americans.

CONGRATULATING TRINITY BALLPARK FOR HOSTING C.A.B.A. MIDWEST NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. TODD ROKITA

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 12, 2011

Mr. ROKITA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate, Trinity Ballpark located in Noblesville, Indiana, for hosting this year's C.A.B.A. Midwest National Championship.

The Continental Amateur Baseball Association was developed by Ron Golden and Roger Tremaine in 1984 to provide youth the privilege to compete at the national level. C.A.B.A. hosts events at the national level for age groups 9–18. Since C.A.B.A. was first started, thousands of teams from nearly every state along with other countries including Panama,

Guam, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Japan, and Canada have participated in C.A.B.A. Current Major League Baseball Stars, Alex Rodriguez and Todd Helton, were both Graduates of the Year of this superior organization.

I am proud to honor Trinity Ballpark for hosting this year's Midwest National Championship, and wish all the players the best of luck in the tournament. Today is a fine day to celebrate America's favorite pastime with elite players from all over the country.

A MODEL FORD

HON. VIRGINIA FOXX

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 12, 2011

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I wish to insert the following poem by Albert Carey Caswell into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. This poem is a fitting tribute to former First Lady Betty Ford.

A MODEL FORD

In life . . .
Do we dance? Or do we stand?
A . . .
A Model Ford . . .
A strong woman, our Nation loved and adored . . .
Nothing Ordinary about her!
About this Ford!
From behind the scenes, a star was born!
Touching hearts, so very deeply . . . so very warm!
Who became an activist, for our nation this!
A role model for women to look up to!
Who evolved and into a work of art . . . so grew!
The only person a great President, owed anything to!
Took away the shame, that women knew . . .
Giving them courage to speak up and out, to fight Cancer too!
With her profiles of courage, out of her own diseases . . . creating something new!
A place for all to so face, and battle and fight their dark demons too . . .
For in you, we all so saw ourselves so too!
As the Betty Ford Clinic grew into a haven for saving lives so true!
A place on this earth so very bright, to win that battle that fight!
Oh Yes, oh how you spoke up and out for women's rights!
A Mother . . . A Wife . . . A First Lady so very bright . . .
An activist who so brought her light!
A Midwesterner, through and through!
A Michigander True Blue!
To bless our Nation, me and you!
A Model Ford, and a Cadillac of first ladies too . . . who now so who . . .
Is up in Heaven as but an Angel, with her husband Gerald too!
Because in the end, in your life Betty . . . you danced!

In Memory of a great First Lady and a giving American, Betty Ford

—By Albert Carey Caswell

HONORING THE TOWN OF EDDINGTON, MAINE

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 12, 2011

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the people of the town of

Eddington, Maine, as they celebrate their community's bicentennial.

In 1784, after the close of the Revolutionary War, Colonel Jonathan Eddy was granted 9,000 acres on the east bank of the Penobscot River in appreciation of his services during the conflict. This area would later be incorporated in 1811 as the town of Eddington, becoming the 184th town in the District of Maine. Working together to clear the land, the early settlers erected buildings, planted crops and built roads. Town records over the years from the individual villages show saw and gristmills, a post office, general stores, churches, schools and other large and small enterprises. The town of Eddington illustrates the spirit of industry and perseverance that Maine people throughout history have demonstrated in embracing the challenges and opportunities of living in our state.

Eddington has shared in many of our nation's experiences. There is evidence of the Underground Railroad, and in the Civil War, one-eighth of the total population of the town was in service. Industrialization brought railroads to neighboring towns, small factories, and electric lights. The depression hit hard as the lumber industry began to diminish and mills were relocated. The conflicts of the twentieth century called upon many Eddington residents to protect their country, state and community, but the members of this town have always risen to the challenge.

Today, the people of Eddington celebrate the bicentennial of their town filled with the same local spirit and sense of common purpose that filled the first families as they petitioned to have their community recognized. These individuals embody the hardworking people of Maine.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating the people of Eddington. It is an honor and a privilege to represent them, and I am pleased to have this opportunity to help Eddington celebrate its 200th anniversary.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. RANDY NEUGEBAUER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 12, 2011

Mr. NEUGEBAUER. Mr. Speaker, due to an unforeseen family medical emergency yesterday morning, I was unable to vote on amendments to H.R. 2354 that were rollcall vote numbers 534–538. Had I been present, I would have voted the following way on the amendments: rollcall No. 534, Tierney of Massachusetts Amendment, “nay”; rollcall No. 535, Graves of Missouri Amendment, “yea”; rollcall No. 536, Scalise of Louisiana Amendment, “yea”; rollcall No. 537, Woodall of Georgia Amendment, “yea”; rollcall No. 538, McClintock of California, “yea.”

RECOGNIZING THE POVERELLO CENTER AND COMMEMORATING THE GRAND OPENING OF ITS NEW FOOD BANK AND THRIFT STORE

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 12, 2011

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize The Poverello Center of Wilton Manors, Florida and commemorate the grand opening of its new food bank and thrift store. For 25 years, The Poverello Center has been an institution in the Broward County community, providing support services to men, women, and children living with HIV/AIDS. With the dedication of its new, green facility at 2056 North Dixie Highway in Wilton Manors, The Poverello Center begins a new chapter in its mission of ensuring that individuals living with HIV/AIDS have life-sustaining food and basic living essentials.

The Poverello Center was founded in 1986 by Father Bill Collins, a man whose courage and compassion know no limits. At a time when many were turning their backs on individuals living with HIV/AIDS, Father Collins reached out to help them with the utmost understanding, respect, and love. Operating at first out of the trunk of his car, he used much of his pension to open the first Poverello food bank and thrift store in Pompano Beach. From those humble beginnings, The Poverello Center has continued to expand and improve its operations to better meet the needs of its clients.

Today, The Poverello Center provides a wide variety of support services to more than 2,500 low-income Broward County residents living with HIV/AIDS while protecting their privacy. Through its food bank, Poverello volunteers ensure that individuals receive 21 meals per week and meet the nutritional requirements necessary to remain adherent to their treatment. Furthermore, clients are given vouchers for clothing that can be redeemed in the Poverello thrift store. And, in order to help promote wellness and physical fitness, clients also have access to Poverello's full-service gym and alternative therapies annex.

Since Poverello's founding, Father Collins and his outstanding team of volunteers have helped over 12,600 lives touched by HIV/AIDS. Remarkably, they are able to provide these services completely free of charge. This would not be possible without the tremendous support of the community or critical HIV/AIDS programs at the state and national levels. That is why I pledge to continue doing everything in my power to help fund the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program and other efforts that address the issues affecting individuals living with HIV/AIDS.

Mr. Speaker, as we recognize The Poverello Center's tremendous success and celebrate the dedication of its new home, I would like to take this opportunity to honor Father Bill Collins as well as each and every member of the Poverello team for all the hard work they continue to do on behalf of the AIDS community in Broward County and the least of us in our society. Their selflessness is a true inspiration to us all.