

chosen as the 36th Surgeon General of the United States Navy and 40th Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery.

An accomplished and published academic, Vice Admiral Robinson holds fellowships in the American College of Surgeons and the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgery. He is a member of the Le Societe Internationale de Chirurgie, the Society of Black Academic Surgeons, and the National Business School Scholastic Society, Beta Gamma Sigma. He holds certification as a Certified Physician Executive (CPE) from the American College of Physician Executives.

Vice Admiral Robinson has been instrumental in preparing the United States Navy for the merger of the National Capitol Region's major health care facilities. He oversaw the planning, construction and execution of the new Joint Medical Facility and ensured that best practices of the Navy and other services were preserved throughout the transition. Vice Admiral Robinson was also never afraid to be an outspoken opponent of policies and issues from the merger that would sacrifice care for Service Members of any service. Without his foresight and wisdom throughout the process, the new National Military Medical Center at Bethesda would not be the shining medical facility model it is today for our Service Men and Women and their Families.

Throughout his career, Vice Admiral Robinson has demonstrated expertise in medicine that ranks him among the very best in the world. However, I would say his most shining achievements have been his exceptional care for our Nation's most important treasure, our wounded Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines, throughout the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Bethesda's renowned reputation as the gold standard of care for wounded Service Members improved throughout his tenure and will be the lasting legacy of the 36th Surgeon General of the Navy.

The United States Navy, the Department of Defense and the Nation will dearly miss one of its most respected and valued leaders as Vice Admiral Adam M. Robinson leaves active duty. We will all miss his humility, his selflessness, his candor and his integrity. When history looks back at this leader and his legacy it will be clear that he saved countless Service Members lives with his policies and daily practices.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a pleasure to work closely with Vice Admiral Robinson over the last several years of his long and decorated career. On behalf of a grateful Nation, I join my colleagues today in recognizing and commending Vice Admiral Adam M. Robinson for a lifetime of service to his country. For all he and his family have given and continue to give to our country; we are in their debt. We wish him, his wife Yuko, all the best in his retirement.

H.R. 2838, THE "COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION ACT OF 2011"

HON. KATHLEEN C. HOCHUL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 17, 2011

Ms. HOCHUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 2838, "the Coast Guard and Mari-

time Transportation Act of 2011," and to salute the brave men and women of the United States Coast Guard for their service to our nation.

As a member of the Homeland Security Committee and the Armed Services Committee, I recognize the critical role the Coast Guard plays in combating piracy, interdicting illegal drugs, preventing acts of terrorism, and assisting our coastal communities when they are afflicted by natural disasters. That is why I am saddened that controversial provisions were attached to this bill.

I cannot support this legislation because it would strip New York State of its right to protect itself from invasive species introduced through ballast water, putting New Yorkers and New York State waters at risk.

My home state is blessed to sit on two Great Lakes: Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. These waters are of critical importance to the Western New York economy and support recreation jobs, fishing jobs, tourism jobs, shipping jobs—jobs at our ports, harbors and canals. The people of New York are all too aware of the havoc that invasive species like Asian Carp and Zebra Mussels can wreak on the Great Lakes and the threat they pose to our economy. That is why I oppose this legislation and urge my colleagues to preserve New York's right to protect our citizens, protect our waters and protect our jobs.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN LATINO MUSEUM ACT

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 17, 2011

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce with Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN (FL-18) the Smithsonian American Latino Museum Act—a companion bill that is also being introduced today in the U.S. Senate by our colleagues Senator ROBERT MENENDEZ (NJ), Senate Majority Leader HARRY REID (NV) and Senator MARCO RUBIO (FL).

The Smithsonian American Latino Museum Act we introduce today advances the work of the National Museum the American Latino Commission—a 23-member bi-partisan, congressionally authorized commission of experts that investigated the potential creation of a museum. Through an exhaustive process that involved consultations with national experts, forums in eight cities (Chicago, Albuquerque, Austin, Miami, St. Paul, Los Angeles, New York City, and San Juan, Puerto Rico), and communication via several online platforms that engaged tens of thousand supporters, the commission generated valuable input regarding the feasibility of an American Latino museum Washington, D.C.

Over the past eighteen years the call has grown stronger and stronger to establish such a museum on our National Mall that shares the rich and full story of what it means to be an American. The effort to create the American Latino Museum dates back to 1993, when a Smithsonian Task Force on Latino Issues formally called for the creation of a national museum dedicated to sharing the story of Latinos' historic, cultural and artistic contributions to the U.S. I was proud to introduce the

legislation in 2003 that created the National Museum of the American Latino Commission. Five years later, in 2008, Congress passed the bill and it was signed by President George W. Bush. Once appointed by Congress and President Barack Obama, the Commission began its work in 2009 with the support of the Department of Interior and Secretary Ken Salazar. The Commission's final 2011 report and recommendations can be viewed at <http://www.americanlatinomuseum.gov>.

The bill we are introducing responds to the Commission's call for the creation of a national museum in Washington, D.C. that "illuminates the American story for the benefit of all" by preserving, presenting and interpreting American Latino history, art, cultural expressions, and experiences. Specifically, the bill:

(1) Establishes within the Smithsonian Institution a museum to be known as the "Smithsonian American Latino Museum."

(2) Designates the museum's site as the Arts and Industries Building on the National Mall, at 900 Jefferson Drive Southwest in Washington, D.C.

(3) Authorizes the Smithsonian Board of Regents to prepare a plan of action for the museum, as referred to in the May 2011 Report to Congress submitted by the Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Museum of the American Latino, in consultation with the Secretary of Interior, the Commission of Fine Arts, the National Capital Planning Commission and federal and local agencies.

(4) Authorizes the Regents to identify and evaluate viable funding models for both the construction and operation of the museum, within 18 months after the bill is enacted.

(5) Authorizes the Regents and Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement that allows for the planning design and construction of an underground annex facility, in a manner harmonious with and to protect the open space and visual sightlines of the Mall.

Today marks a key moment in our effort to ensure that the contributions of Americans of Latino descent receive respect and recognition earned by a patriotic community of Americans who have served this nation since its inception and now number over 50 million. I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass this bill and to supporting the Smithsonian Institution in an important new chapter of its work to increase understanding of the American experience.

STANDING AGAINST VOTER SUPPRESSION

HON. DIANA DeGETTE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 17, 2011

Ms. DeGETTE. Mr. Speaker, voter suppression efforts are well underway in my home state of Colorado. In September, the Colorado Secretary of State actually sued the City and County of Denver because the Clerk and Recorder's office over sending election ballots to every registered voter in Denver, including inactive registered voting men and women of the military and citizens living overseas. Our Secretary of State took exception because the law states ballots shall be mailed to all active registered electors. Last month, a Denver judge ruled that Denver County could in fact

send these ballots to all registered voters for the upcoming November election, but officers at the highest levels of our state government have indicated they will continue in their attempts to limit the participation of any legal voter in our community.

Unfortunately as it stands already, just more than half of eligible voters in the United States show up to make themselves heard during Presidential election years. That percentage dips into the thirties in so called "off years." The last thing we need in America is fewer people voting. With 14 million Americans looking for work, and millions more struggling as a result of a growing wage gap, the problems facing this country are profound and complex, and addressing them will require a broad range of voices.

All of us bear the responsibility for encouraging voter turnout—especially in traditionally disenfranchised areas. Voting is the most effective way to drown out the influence of corporate campaign donations and the unaccountable and unwieldy super political action committees, which can raise unlimited sums of money to pour into our elections. Voting is the most effective way to be heard on the issues impacting our nation. For too many Americans, the right to vote did not come easy and many of us recognize the perilous consequences of not guarding this right aggressively.

In 1964, Chief Justice Earl Warren expressed one of the basic truths of American history, that "the right of suffrage is a fundamental matter in a free and democratic society." Efforts to suppress the democratic right to vote in pursuit of electoral gain are both misguided and unconstitutional, and I will continue to fight at the federal level to ensure every American, regardless of race, income, or heritage will have the opportunity to participate in the "fundamental matter in a free and democratic society."

THE SENSIBLE ESTATE TAX OF 2011

HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 17, 2011

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Sensible Estate Tax Act of

2011. This legislation offers a thoughtful comprehensive approach to reforming our estate tax system that is supported by voters across all income levels. As America comes out of one of the worst recessions in its history, this Congress must carefully consider all sources of revenue that are not only effective, but fair and equitable. This estate tax embodies those values.

The past decade of failed tax policies have killed jobs and resulted in significant income and wealth disparity in this country. The promise and strength of America lies in a system that benefits everyone. These tax policies have steered us away from this promise and crippled the American economy. The middle class continues to shrink as more and more wealth flows to the top—and this country's current tax system makes this unfairness worse. The current estate tax policy is the poster child for the unfairness we all see.

That is why I am introducing this legislation. This bill will bring the estate tax back to the rates and exemptions from before the Bush tax cuts—a time when this country experienced continued prosperity and budget surpluses.

Specifically, the Sensible Estate Tax Act of 2011 will return the top marginal rate to 55 percent and lower the exemption for individuals to \$1 million. It will also reunify the gift and estate taxes, and provide for permanent portability of any unused exemption. Accountants and taxpayers have been asking Congress for a permanent and fair estate tax so they may properly plan their affairs. This bill does just that. Additional estate tax loopholes are also addressed, including a 10-year minimum on grantor retained annuity trusts, limitations on the generation skipping transfer trust exemption, and rules for consistent basis reporting.

Today's law allows for up to \$10 million in wealth to be transferred tax-free at death. And some of my colleagues across the aisle say even that is not enough. In a country that cherished the ideal that where you are born should not determine where you end up, it is inherently unfair that the average middle class family pays income tax while the children of rich parents can inherit \$10 million tax-free.

Succeeding financially in life is a wonderful American right and the families of wealthy people should benefit from that good fortune. But no one gets wealthy on their own—financial success for any American is achieved by using the roads, schools, and public services

that all Americans pay for. It is only fair that they reinvest in the country that provided them with so much opportunity.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 17, 2011

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I would like the record to show that, due to an error, I voted "aye" on H.R. 822, the "National Right-to-Carry Reciprocity Act," (rollcall vote No. 852) when I intended to vote "no." I would also like the record to show that I would have voted "aye" on rollcall No. 849.

Coming from Illinois, a state that does not issue permits to carry concealed weapons, I understand the importance of allowing each state and locality to determine what gun policy is most appropriate for them. From 1999–2006, 9,054 residents of Illinois were killed by gun violence. These numbers are jarring and, when faced with escalating gun violence in the city of Chicago, I simply cannot support efforts to erode and circumvent tough state gun laws.

The "National Right-to-Carry Reciprocity Act" would preempt state laws by forcing states to accept permits to carry concealed weapons from other states regardless of any differences in safety standards or requirements to obtain the permit. In other words, Indiana, which prohibits individuals with certain dangerous criminal misdemeanor convictions from carrying concealed weapons, would be forced to allow permit holders from states without that requirement to carry concealed weapons within the state. In addition, it would be virtually impossible for a law enforcement officer to determine if an out-of-state permit was validly issued, creating more danger and uncertainty for our officers.

I fear that, if this bill were enacted, it would put law enforcement officers and our communities at great risk while simultaneously eroding the authority of the states to dictate their own rules in the gun permitting process. I am deeply committed to ensuring that our communities are safe from the ravages of gun violence and I will ardently oppose any legislation to further erode strong state and local gun laws.