

natural gas or oil pipeline. I also have thousands of constituents who rely on this industry for employment and their livelihood. I understand the need to pass a bill that addresses the dual priorities of ensuring safety along these pipelines and providing regulatory certainty for the operators in the years ahead.

There are problems with the bill, for instance, this bill may lead to an attempt by this Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, PHMSA, or future PHMSAs to regulate offshore gathering lines in the same way that onshore lines are regulated. While not prescribed by this legislation, the door is left open. It is important that PHMSA carefully consider how to regulate these lines and not take a one-size fits all approach. There are other tweaks that would have been nice, but this is a good bill and represents a bipartisan compromise.

Failure to pass a bill, or one side or another pursuing a partisan agenda over good policy, would have been far worse than the small problems I have with this bill. I commend Representatives UPTON and DINGELL for this bill and I urge my colleagues to support it.

RECOGNIZING ARIANNA
MCQUILLEN, RECIPIENT OF A
BUICK AND GENERAL MOTORS
FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Arianna McQuillen, of Fairfax Station, on her selection as a Buick and General Motors Foundation Scholarship Recipient. She has been identified as one of 100 outstanding students from across the United States to receive up to \$25,000 in a renewable scholarship. She plans to attend Massachusetts Institute of Technology and specialize in robotics.

Arianna is very involved in our community, working on projects such as cleaning the Occoquan watershed, planting trees, preparing care packages for soldiers abroad and tutoring young students.

Her academic record is proof that she is a high-achieving student. She studied at Lake Braddock Secondary School, where her interests varied from math and science to art and the environment. She has won many awards in areas ranging from debate to art. She is a National Merit Scholar, a 2010 Beat the Odds Scholarship Recipient, an Advanced Placement Scholar, and a National Achievement Semi-Finalist.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Arianna McQuillen's remarkable achievements and wishing her continued success as she pursues her degree at MIT.

HONORING SLOVAK EXPLOSIVE
ORDINANCE DISPOSAL (EOD)
MAJOR BARTAKOVICS AND EOD
TEAM

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Slovak Explosive Ordinance Disposal, EOD, Maj. Roland Bartakovics and the entire Slovak EOD team for their role in resisting an assault by armed insurgents on Camp Nathan Smith in Kandahar. I would like to recognize the Slovaks for their bravery during a failed enemy attack on the base.

The camp in Kandahar, which houses the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team, KPRT, was attacked by four armed insurgents with rocket-propelled grenades and small fire arms. The attack lasted nearly 11 hours, and was ended by the Afghan National Police supported by coalition forces, including the Slovak EOD team. Thanks to the determined professionalism of the Slovak unit, at no point did the attackers gain access to the compound.

I would like to offer my condolences to the families and loved ones of those killed and injured during the attack. The heroic leadership of the entire Slovak unit will forever be remembered. Their service and dedication has brought great pride to their nation, families and communities.

Echoed throughout Afghanistan, the KPRT reflects a productive civilian-military partnership. The United States stands with the Afghan people and their government in pursuing the mutual goal of a stable and prosperous Afghanistan. The United States owes a great debt of gratitude to Maj. Roland Bartakovics and the entire Slovak EOD team for putting themselves in harm's way in the pursuit of freedom.

MIDDLE CLASS TAX RELIEF AND
JOB CREATION ACT OF 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. DAVID B. MCKINLEY

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Mr. MCKINLEY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I voted to protect the Social Security Trust Fund by opposing H.R. 3630 and would like to take this opportunity to discuss my decision. This bill was a patchwork of many policies that were thrown together at the last hour and created a flawed piece of legislation that I could not support.

Primarily, the corner stone of this legislation—the extension of the payroll tax reduction—did not create jobs for the last year it has been in effect. Over the past five months, I have been vocal in my opposition to the President's unproductive plan. Since, I do support a long-term “doc fix” to ensure that doctors continue to accept Medicare patients, I do not support the \$17 billion cut from hospital payments, including those that are essential to help hospitals care for low-income Medicare patients. I do support the Keystone XL pipeline and efforts to reform unemployment insurance; however, these were not the central

issues of the legislation we considered yesterday.

Over the last several days, I have conducted numerous town hall-like meetings to discuss this legislation with constituents. As a result of these conversations with everyday West Virginians, it was apparent to me that breaking from both President Obama and even my own party on this bill was the right thing to do.

Washington just doesn't get it. This tax cut has been in effect for the last year and it clearly did not improve the economy. And at what cost? For the second year in a row, this bill would take another \$180 billion from Social Security with a promise to be paid back over the years, all to give the average West Virginia worker an extra \$30 in his or her paycheck every two weeks. That's not a jobs plan—it's a re-election plan. We have seen these same unsuccessful economic plans for the past three years, and for those three years they have failed miserably. Does it make sense to continue to make choices that we know from experience do not work?

I will concede that after spending most of this past year above 9 percent, unemployment has dropped to 8.6 percent. But the primary driver of this change is simply that 315,000 Americans simply stopped looking for work. Also, at this time of year, the retail industry increases their staff by almost 50 percent; those people will be back on unemployment benefits in February. Nobody can say that the payroll tax “holiday” has had a meaningful impact on the unemployment rate thus far, nor will it likely prove beneficial if extended for another year.

We've all been told that Social Security's finances are in trouble, yet President Obama's plan makes the situation worse. We cannot continue to send mixed messages to senior citizens and current workers. They need to be able to trust that Social Security will be there for them. If we do not stop extending this payroll tax cut, then Social Security will cease to be a guarantee and instead become another typical government program reliant entirely on politicians' whims.

That's not fair for our seniors or current workers who are currently paying into Social Security. So the question becomes, if not now, when we will stop raiding Social Security?

H.R. 3630 is just another temporary tax reduction that only produces more uncertainty for employers and fails to protect our seniors. Real structural reforms are needed to stabilize Social Security. Past experience shows that Congress will spend the next 10 years figuring out how to spend the money designated as offsets for today's bill on other projects. It won't be used to pay for the bill; I could not in good faith support a measure that will raid the trust fund without comprehensive reform to the system.

As Andrew Biggs, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, said, “People don't generally respond well to temporary tax cuts so it's unlikely you're going to see a strong economic response.” House Budget Committee Chairman PAUL RYAN has likened the payroll tax cut to “sugar-high economics.” And Chris Edwards, a tax scholar at the Cato Institute, said that the president's plan “is based on faulty Keynesian theories and misplaced confidence in the government's ability to micromanage short-run growth.” Perpetuating the president's failed economic policies,

especially if we have to rob Social Security to do it, has to stop.

Additionally, the reductions in federal reimbursements to hospitals that are contained in this legislation are not acceptable. Hospitals in northern West Virginia are already being paid at some of the lowest Medicare rates in the country; we should not be making it even harder for the hospitals to provide quality healthcare to our seniors.

Again, since this bill was loaded up at the last minute with several items which I have already strongly supported throughout this Congress—including jumpstarting the Keystone Pipeline, relaxing EPA regulations on boilers, extending and reforming unemployment benefits and other government programs, and preventing a scheduled 27% cut to doctors' Medicare reimbursement rates—it is simply unacceptable to continue the president's misguided economic theories at seniors' expense.

This bill has a long way to go despite the short timeframe in which Congress is operating, and if significant changes are made, it may be worth another look. But I came to Washington to get something done, create jobs, and restore common sense to the process. Unfortunately this particular bill fails that test.

RECOGNIZING THE YOEMEN MARCHING BAND OF CAMERON HIGH SCHOOL IN CAMERON, TEXAS

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the Yoemen Marching Band of Cameron High School who placed third out of the 297 bands in state 2A marching competition in San Antonio on November 7, 2011.

The 97 member band is under the direction of Stephen Moss, head director, and Craig George and Danielle Roberts, assistant directors. Only ten bands performed in the finals competition, and the Yoemen Marching Band received a 1st place vote from all five judges, which advanced them to the UIL State Marching Contest in San Antonio for the first time in the history of the school. The band competed in the preliminary competition at the UIL State Marching Contest, which advanced them to the finals portion of the competition. The Yoemen Marching Band came in 2nd place behind the two time champion Queen City.

This 2nd place finish advanced the band to the highly coveted finals competition that same evening. The Yoeman High School Marching Band was also selected to play at the World War II Memorial in Washington DC and was one of the ten bands selected to play in the Houston Livetock Show and Rodeo Parade this past spring.

I congratulate the Cameron High School Yoemen Marching Band on their accomplishments and I am proud to represent them in the United States Congress.

RECOGNIZING THE SEMI-FINALISTS FOR THE ASIAN AMERICAN SUCCESS YOUTHCON SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor to rise today to recognize the finalists of the 2011 Asian American Success (AASuccess) YouthCon Scholarship program. Each year, AASuccess grants scholarships and recognition awards to 6 students in the Washington, DC Metropolitan Area.

Founded in April 2006 by Dave Nguyen, Irina Nguyen, David Montanari, Sumesh Kaushal and Malou Gemeniano, the missions of AASuccess are to promote academic excellence of young Asian American and other minority students, foster mentorship and partnership between career professionals and student members, and promote "The Act of Giving Back" in the Asian American community. AASuccess offers 4 different programs to achieve their goals; the AAS Life Skills Academy, Scholarship Program, Giving Back Program, and the Arc360 Web TV Program.

Scholarships are awarded in amounts ranging from \$500.00 to \$1000.00, and winners are selected based on academic performance, civic engagement, and completion of an essay. Using famous images from Saigon for inspiration, the theme for this year's essay asked applicants to consider their freedom, and the connection between protection of personal freedoms and civic duties. This thought provoking topic has encouraged students to reflect on and consider some of the most crucial questions we face today.

While there will be 6 scholarship winners, it is my great pleasure to recognize the following 12 finalists:

Ms. Sungmin Sohn; Mr. Vihanh Tham; Ms. Khanh-Ni Thi Nguyen; Ms. Mai Ly; Ms. Julie Hoang; Mr. Dylan Vu; Mr. Tristin Tran; Mr. Maxwell Tran; Mr. Minh Pham; Ms. Kirby Taylor; Ms. Julia Ngoc-Kim Nguyen; Ms. Krystal Sing.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding the efforts of these students, and in congratulating them on their academic and civic accomplishments. I also commend AASuccess for their efforts to ensure and encourage professional development and success of students in our community.

MIDDLE CLASS TAX RELIEF AND JOB CREATION ACT OF 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, during this Season of Giving, when our nation should be reflecting on the need of friends and neighbors who are out of work and struggling to provide for their loved ones, this chamber will vote today to cut unemployment benefits for one million of our fellow Americans.

The House Majority's bill, H.R. 3630, would eliminate several tiers of benefits, created

under the Emergency Unemployment Compensation program, which has provided up to 99 weeks of support for those who lost their jobs through no fault of their own.

If this legislation becomes law, the maximum potential unemployment benefit will fall to 59 weeks.

This legislation would also allow states, many of which are struggling to balance their budgets, to reduce the average weekly amount available to beneficiaries.

I am strongly opposed to any reduction in emergency unemployment insurance.

This Congress cannot and must not adjourn for the holidays and go home to tell our unemployed neighbors that the richest country on earth cannot find a place in their heart to help them in their time of need.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I am not able to support H.R. 3630 even though I am a strong supporter of moving the Keystone XL Project along and would support the language included in this bill if considered separately.

The Keystone XL project makes both energy and economic sense for our country, and I hope that the Administration could find a way to allow for construction to commence in some of the states while simultaneously revisiting the route in Nebraska.

I urge my colleagues to stand in support of the millions of our fellow Americans struggling to find work and to oppose this legislation.

HOUSE DEMOCRACY PARTNERSHIP

HON. DAVID DREIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, when I was first elected to this body in 1980, the preeminent national security threat that gravely concerned us all was the Soviet Union. A decade later, as we know very well, the Soviet Union collapsed and the Cold War came to an end. As we quickly near the twentieth anniversary of that transformative event, we should not forget the role that the United States Congress played in supporting democratic development in the legislatures of many of the former Warsaw Pact and Soviet republics. The Frost-Solomon Task Force partnered with the newly democratically elected members of post-Soviet legislatures to offer support and guidance in building an independent, co-equal legislative branch of government. A key part of that effort was the role our Congressional Research Service played in building strong, independent, nonpartisan research and analysis capabilities for these nascent institutions. Many of these countries are now members of NATO, the European Union, and in some cases, the Eurozone. They are fully integrated into the Trans-Atlantic partnership.

However, the work of democratic development in the region is not over. I have the privilege of leading, along with my friend and colleague Rep. DAVID PRICE, the House Democracy Partnership (HDP). Our commission is committed to helping strengthen legislatures in new and re-emerging democracies by engaging with our counterparts throughout the world. Two of our partner countries are Ukraine and the Republic of Georgia. Both are former Soviet republics working to consolidate their democracies. To date, their efforts have been