

to ensure all Americans have the health protections they need and access to the quality health care they deserve. The health reform law we have in place does this.

Today the U.S. House is debating the repeal of the Affordable Care Act. The Republican-Tea Party majority officially titled the bill before us, H.R. 2, the "Repealing the Job-Killing Health Care Law Act." They use the word "killing" five times in a bill that isn't even two pages long. Not only is the bill's title offensive and disrespectful, it is untrue. The fact is the health reform law does not kill jobs, its patient protections save lives and create jobs. More than 200,000 health care related jobs have been created since the law passed in March of last year.

This Tea Party Republican bill strips away patient protections for children, seniors, and adults with pre-existing medical conditions. It replaces tough legal protections for patients with a uniquely Republican solution—nothing. Republicans strip away protections for millions of Americans, add \$230 billion to the federal budget deficit according to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, and restore a broken health care system which empowers insurance companies, not patients.

I want Minnesotans to know exactly what repealing the existing health reform law would do. If this Republican bill were to become law it would mean:

Stripping 32 millions of Americans of health insurance and new consumer protections;

Allowing insurers to deny coverage to children with pre-existing conditions, apply restrictive lifetime coverage limits, impose cost sharing on preventative care, and retroactively cancel a policy when an individual gets sick; Eliminating tax credits for as many as 99,000 Minnesota small businesses providing their employees health insurance;

Refusing 11,400 young adults in Minnesota the option to remain on their parents' health insurance until they turn 26;

Maintaining a perverse payment system that rewards providers for the volume of services delivered, rather than the quality of those services;

Jeopardizing the early retiree health coverage provided by 210 Minnesota employers and unions currently receiving financial assistance through the "The Early Retiree Reinsurance Program"; and

Risking the Medicare benefits and prescription drug coverage seniors and people with disabilities depend on to meet their health needs.

H.R. 2 is more than political posturing. It is legislation that sends a clear message to the American people: Republicans care more about protecting insurance company profits than protecting the rights of patients. I will oppose this bill and I will oppose and battle against every effort made in the 112th Congress to defund, sidetrack, or stall the full implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

I am not alone in opposing H.R. 2. Hundreds of national organizations and dozens of Minnesota groups oppose this blatantly partisan effort to repeal health reform. Here are a few excerpts from letters I received over the past few days.

The Minnesota Medical Association: "the MMA opposes efforts to repeal the ACA (Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act) and urges you to vote against it."

Catholic Hospital Association of Minnesota: "I strongly urge you to maintain support for ef-

forts to improve and strengthen our nation's health care system by opposing the legislation before the House to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA)."

Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota: "We strongly encourage you to vote against repeal of the ACA and work toward ensuring that implementation includes the needs of people with epilepsy and other chronic health conditions."

Minnesota Hospital Association: "On behalf of the 148 hospital and 17 health system members of the Minnesota Hospital Association, I am writing to express our opposition to legislation that would repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA)."

Today, as the debate on this ill conceived and mean-spirited bill is taking place, I received the following message from a consortium of small business leaders from across the country:

The House of Representative's introduction of a bill to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act is an affront to our nation's small business community.

The country's 28 million small businesses stand to benefit greatly from many provisions of the new healthcare law, particularly the tax credits and health insurance exchanges. These two provisions will help drive down costs and offer small business owners more choices when purchasing insurance. These critical provisions and many others would be abolished if the Affordable Care Act is repealed.

This would be a huge setback to entrepreneurs who need solutions to the broken healthcare system, not a continuation of it. America's 22 million self-employed would also suffer, as a repeal of the ACA would deny them the opportunity to pool together and purchase insurance at an affordable price through state exchanges.

It is important to remember that the Republican's dangerous and destructive health repeal agenda can only work if Americans are silent and passive, allowing live-saving rights and protections to be stripped away. Repeal will not happen today, even if this bill is passed, but over the course of the next two years Republicans and their corporate benefactors will use every legal and political channel available to deny citizens their health care rights. They will not stop.

But I will not stop either. I will not stop fighting for the health care rights for all Americans.

I urge all Minnesotans and all Americans to stand up and join me in the fight to protect the historic patient rights all citizens have gained through the Affordable Care Act and that starts with a vote against H.R. 2.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 20, 2011

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately due to massive flight delays, I was not able to be in Washington, DC on Tuesday January 18, 2011 to vote on H.R. 292 and wished to express my intentions had I been in Washington, DC.

Unfortunately, as American Airlines flight 3879 was boarding, the airline decided to hold

the flight on the tarmac during a de-icing process of several other planes. My flight remained on the ground for well over two hours past its scheduled departure time of 3:10 CST. The plane eventually took off at 5:44 CST and did not arrive in Washington until 8:21 p.m. EST.

Had I been present to vote on Rollcall No. 12, to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 292, the Stop the OverPrinting (STOP) Act, I would have voted "yes".

IN HONOR OF LIEUTENANT BRUCE
F. GUNSCH

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 20, 2011

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of Lieutenant Bruce F. Gunsch upon his retirement from the Rocky River Police Department after more than 30 years of dedicated service.

Lieutenant Bruce F. Gunsch was born in Lakewood, Ohio on April 23, 1949. After graduating from St. Edward High School in 1967, Mr. Gunsch served in the U.S. Army from 1968 to 1971, achieving the rank of Sergeant. He earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Cleveland State University in 1976.

Lieutenant Gunsch began his career with the Rocky River Police Department on February 14, 1977. He was promoted to Sergeant in 1984 and Lieutenant in 1987.

The life of a police officer is one of true selflessness and service, and Lieutenant Gunsch is no exception. Each day the brave men and women of law enforcement put their lives on the line for the good of their communities.

Mr. Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor of Lieutenant Bruce F. Gunsch for his exemplary service on behalf of his community. Lieutenant Gunsch's dedication to making Rocky River a safer place to live and work is honorable and inspiring. At the age of 61, Lieutenant Sharp has served and protected the people of Rocky River with courage for 34 years. We thank him for his service and wish him health and happiness.

IN RECOGNITION OF JOSEPH E.
TELLES

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 20, 2011

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Battalion Chief Joseph E. Telles for his 25 years of service with the San Bruno Fire Department. He was a past president of the San Mateo County Operations Committee and a member of the San Mateo County Communications/Technology Committee. Joe also served as the Fire Departments Liaison to the Bay Area Rapid Transit.

Joe started his career as a Firefighter in 1985 at the age of 25. He was promoted to Fire Captain in 2002 and to Battalion Chief in 2004.

During the 2009 Shu-Lightening wildland fire incident in the Shasta Trinity Forest, Joe was

the Strike Team Leader, demonstrating—as he has throughout his career—his extraordinary leadership and organizational skills.

Joe has been successful in securing many grants to help the fire department obtain vital equipment, such as self-contained breathing apparatus, EMS jackets, wildland shelters, truck rescue equipment, and portable radios.

The biggest accomplishment for a fire fighter is to not have anyone killed or seriously injured. Joe has a proud record of that accomplishment, even though he has fought a large number of big fires. Among them was a church fire in San Bruno that almost cost him his own life and the Salami fire in South San Francisco. In that fire Joe made what he calls “the best decision of his life.” He ordered 20 fire fighters out of the building right before its roof collapsed.

By far the biggest fire Joe and numerous fire fighters ever had to face was the “Glenview Incident,” the horrendous PG&E natural gas pipeline explosion in San Bruno on September 9, 2010 that killed 8 people and destroyed 37 homes. Due to the outstanding heroism of Joe and his colleagues, countless lives were saved. He was part of a world class emergency response team that prevented the disaster from reaching unimaginable proportions.

Joe has been married to his wife Cindy for as long as he has been Battalion Chief. They are the proud parents of three children, Jacquelyn, Joey and Wesley.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of this body to join me in honoring Joe Telles upon his retirement for his dedication to public service at the City of San Bruno Fire Department.

AFGHANISTAN WAR

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 20, 2011

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, Afghanistan continues to sink deeper into political crisis.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai's legitimacy and effectiveness as a leader is again being tested by the winners of last September's parliamentary elections. More than 200 parliamentarians have agreed to conduct a parliamentary session this weekend despite calls by President Karzai to delay the opening session due to complaints of fraud during par-

liamentary elections. Karzai appointed a special court to examine charges of fraud despite unanswered questions of massive fraud in his own reelection in 2009.

A May 2009 report by the United Nations, UN, estimates that the majority of the Afghan population lives in poverty, despite the country having received almost 40 billion in aid between 2002 and 2009. The report blames widespread corruption and abuse of power as a main cause of Afghan suffering, leaving ordinary people without even the most basic services.

If we accept the premise that we need to be in Afghanistan until corruption falls by the wayside, we will be in Afghanistan forever. We cannot afford to continue pouring billions of dollars in Afghanistan to prop up a hopelessly corrupt Afghan central government. It is time to end this war.

IN RECOGNITION OF JAMES P. FOX

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 20, 2011

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor James P. Fox for his public service as district attorney of San Mateo County for 27 years. Jim was first elected in 1982 and then re-elected every four years since without opposition.

I first worked with Jim when I served on the Board of Supervisors. Even then, he was known as the “Silver Fox” for the luxurious topping of silver on his head. During my time in the California Legislature, I received many calls from Jim who often offered suggestions regarding legislation. We worked closely together on strengthening California's laws so that non-paying obligor parents would pay up what was owed. He once told me he saw a local realtor depicted as a family man in an advertisement with his new wife and their children on a beach, all the while failing to support his former wife and their children. Jim wasn't afraid to name names. The realtor paid up.

Jim courageously opposed the Three Strikes Initiative. He is a district attorney who has the courage to favor punishment when appropriate and who also favors treatment and deterrence through crime prevention. Jim is tough as nails but also thoughtful—a true pub-

lic servant. He decided at an early age to dedicate his career to the law. In third grade, home sick with pneumonia, he watched the McCarthy hearings on television and declared he would be an attorney.

Jim received his Bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of San Francisco in 1966 and his law degree from the University of San Francisco in 1969. In 1970 he started as a deputy district attorney for the San Mateo County District Attorney's office for four years before entering private practice for seven years in addition to serving as the city attorney of Half Moon Bay.

His dedication to public service has been outstanding. He has found time and energy to be a member of a number of commissions and committees, including the California Bar Association's Commission on Judicial Nominations Evaluations, the Criminal Law Advisory Committee, the Court Profiles Committee and the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Cameras in the Courtroom. He is a past president of the California District Attorneys' Association and a past vice president of the National District Attorneys' Association. Jim has been appointed twice to the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training.

Additionally, Jim has been very active in civic affairs. He served as a member of the Board of Directors of Mercy High School in Burlingame, the Board of Directors of Notre Dame High School in Belmont and Junipero Serra High School in San Mateo and as a member of the San Mateo County Children and Family First Commission, now named First Five.

With all of these volunteer positions, Jim still finds time to pursue his culinary passion. His chocolate fudge is legendary. If you have attended county events with Jim, you may have encountered these delicious confections labeled with his signature golden sticker depicting a fox and proclaiming: “County of San Mateo, FOX FUDGE (not produced at government expense).”

Jim's wonderful sense of humor and easy smile endear him to his colleagues, friends and his family. He and his wife Bonnie of 42 years are the proud parents of three and grandparents of seven.

Mr. Speaker, it is right to honor James P. Fox for his tireless dedication to the public upon the occasion of his retirement on December 31, 2010, after seven terms as the District Attorney of San Mateo County.