

Mr. BURGESS. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

As a member of the Tarrant County delegation, I also want to stand in remembrance of Tom Vandergriff and his 55-year career in public service. Thirteen years it took him to bring major league baseball to Arlington, Texas, and he took the team from Washington, DC that was then known as the Senators; had to fight two Presidents in a bipartisan fashion, both Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon.

Judge Vandergriff was the original representative from the 26th District of Texas when it was formed after the 1980 census. My fondest memory of Judge Vandergriff is, however, as the voice of the Texas Rangers. Along with Dick Risenhoover, he would do the broadcasts. They were spellbinding and exciting and kept me away many times from my graduate school studies.

To his family, we offer our prayers and condolences. Thank you, Judge Vandergriff, for 55 excellent years in public service.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I know we have a new protocol for recognizing former Members who have passed away. Is it appropriate under our rules to have a moment of silence for Judge Vandergriff? And if so, how would I request such a moment of silence?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would recommend that the gentleman from Texas consult with the leadership on making such requests.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. So it would not be appropriate at this time?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is correct, and the gentleman's time has expired.

□ 1400

#### THE MINDLESS REPEAL OF THE ACCOUNTABLE CARE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, we have a new leader in the House and a new majority, and next week they are going to begin their legislative activity with a stunt. It is a stunt they are bringing out here to pretend that they are repealing the Accountable Care Act that was passed in the last session. They know it won't pass the Senate, they know the President isn't going to accept it, so it is being done simply for their base. Now, I object to doing stunts like this when they affect real people's lives.

I just would ask you for a minute to consider what the repeal of this means to middle class families in this country. I am a physician. There are other physicians on the floor. They know how this repeal will affect people in this country.

In September, we already had go into effect the ability of families to put

their children on their health insurance up to the age of 26. This repeal will say, if you have got a 25-year-old who has cystic fibrosis and is on your health care plan and getting their medications through your health care plan, we are going to take it away from you. That is what they are saying in this.

They are saying for preexisting conditions, if you were trying to get a health care plan and your wife or your son or you have a preexisting condition, you can be denied by an insurance company. We have already passed a law that says that can't happen. It went in in September. Yet the Republicans are going to come out here and say to the middle class in this country, we are going to take away your protection against insurance companies denying you coverage.

It goes on and on and on, but I want to focus on one particular part of this bill. This bill has the largest middle class tax cut in history—the largest tax cut for the middle class in history—because the tax cuts in this health care bill to help the middle class are used for giving credits to people when they buy insurance. People buy insurance, they get a tax credit. It is the largest one in history.

Let me say that again so you get it: They are going to vote next week. They are going to stand out here with a straight face and vote to repeal the largest middle class tax cut in the history of this great Nation that will be worth \$110 billion that they will take away from the middle class.

Now, a few weeks ago we passed a tax bill out of here and we had to give tax cuts to people who make millions and millions of dollars—millions. They said if you don't give the tax cuts to the rich, we are not going to give them to the middle class. The entire Republican Caucus voted against tax cuts unless millionaires got them. Well, we should have learned from that that this repeal will be just more of the same—take \$110 billion away from the middle class by taking a repeal of this law.

You don't have to take it from me. This isn't me making this up. Families USA, a nonpartisan group, has put out this information, and everybody understands it. Now, upstairs in the Rules Committee right now, I could be up there talking but I decided I will talk here first and then go up there and try to get this amendment offered in the bill that will be on Friday. ALLYSON SCHWARTZ and GWEN MOORE are up there already working on this. But it would prevent a repeal effort from increasing taxes on moderate-income or low-income individuals, including through the elimination of tax credits for health care premiums as provided under the health care reform law. We would exempt that one part out of the repeal.

I don't know what success I will have up there, but we will go and try, because it is worth trying. It is worth pointing out how absolutely unthink-

ing this is. It is a mindless thing to come out here with this repeal.

#### IMPLEMENTING REAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Madam Speaker, my remarks will be about saving money, but I can't help but take an opportunity to respond to the previous speaker, my good friend, the gentleman, the good doctor from the State of Washington.

I would say to him, Madam Speaker, and to my colleagues, when we repeal ObamaCare, which we will do in this House next Wednesday, parents will once again be able to afford a health insurance policy on which to include their adult children. That is what we will be doing.

As far as this \$110 billion worth of savings we lose in repealing ObamaCare, Madam Speaker, we spent \$1.1 trillion to save \$110 billion. Hey, Madam Speaker, it is true that you can indeed go broke trying to save money.

With that, Madam Speaker, let me get on to my 5-minute discussion.

I rise today to encourage my colleagues to recall the conversations they had with their constituents during the recent campaign season. As we begin the 112th Congress, to remember that the American people spoke with a resounding voice, didn't they, on November 2. They told us to abide by the Constitution, to rein in spending, bring about economic stability, create jobs, and end the culture of crafting legislation in the dark of night, 2,400 pages on the health care bill, outside of the view of the public.

In order to fulfill this mandate, we must fundamentally change the way we do business here in Washington. I have taken the first steps by introducing several legislative initiatives this week, and they are all centered around the pursuit of meaningful government reform.

Madam Speaker, transparency is an integral part of this package and a necessary element for real government reform. For the first time, the Constitution, a document critical to understanding our parameters and responsibility, was read right here in the House today, on the House floor.

I am proud to have introduced a bill as part of my initiative stating that any legislation brought to the floor must cite its constitutional authority. Many may find it surprising to know, Madam Speaker, that while votes taken on the floor of the House are available on the Net to view, or on the Web site, that is not necessarily the case in committee. Therefore, my package also contains a committee transparency bill. It would require committee votes to be posted online, on the committee Web site, within 48

hours, so the American people are kept better informed of what their Members are doing and how they are voting in committee.

Madam Speaker, the rejection by the American people of the Democrats' reckless spending emphasizes the importance of fiscal responsibility, doesn't it? This is the reason I incorporated the Congressional Budget Accountability Act into my plan.

Each year, my colleagues and I receive a fixed budget for all office expenses. We call that the MRA, or the Members' Representational Allowance. This bill would codify that our unused MRA funds must be returned to the Treasury for debt and deficit reduction.

Along these lines, I have also included what is called the Fiscal Responsibility Act, which will preclude any Member of Congress from being eligible for a pay adjustment, a so-called COLA, if we have incurred a budget deficit in the previous fiscal year.

We may not have a balanced budget amendment, Madam Speaker, but that doesn't mean we can't balance the budget, and I want to hold our feet to the fire. This is yet another way that we can do that.

Also in the package, Madam Speaker, is a bill to prevent Federal employees from engaging in union activity on official time. It is amazing that this goes on, but we have estimated that in a 5-year period of time we could save the taxpayer over \$600 million and \$1.2 billion in a 10-year period of time.

Put simply, it is unacceptable that government employees paid with, yes, your tax dollars, are currently permitted to spend time during their workday performing union activities. I have already given you the savings.

Equally unacceptable is that legislators in Washington commonly attach legislation that cannot pass on its own merits to unrelated must-pass bills. Let me give you an example, Military Construction-VA.

A couple of years ago, we passed that out of committee with an almost 100 percent bipartisan vote. The Democratic majority held that bill up for 100 days because they wanted to attach an unpopular bill, something like the Dream Act or Don't Ask, Don't Tell, some controversial bill, and put our veterans at jeopardy. They literally held them hostage. This bill, Madam Speaker, would say from now on, no attaching unpopular bills to good standalone bills, especially if they are for our veterans and the military.

Madam Speaker, in conclusion, while these bills may seem like a small start compared to the big challenges we have ahead of us in this Congress, the 112th, it is a pathway to start changing business as usual in Washington and fulfill the promises we made on November 2 to the American people.

□ 1410

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentle-

woman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### THE PROSPERITY CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my hope that historians will look back on the 112th Congress as the session that restored American prosperity and to express my strong agreement with the new leaders of this House who have declared that every action of this body must be measured against this goal.

We speak of jobs, jobs, jobs, but jobs are merely a byproduct of prosperity. And prosperity is the product of freedom. Government does not create jobs or wealth. It merely redistributes them. Jobs and wealth can only be created through the free exchange of goods and services in a free market. Government's role is to create and protect the conditions which promote prosperity.

If I give you a dollar for a cup of coffee, what's going on in that transaction? I'm telling you that your cup of coffee is worth more to me than my dollar. And at the same time, you're telling me that my dollar is worth more to you than your cup of coffee. We make that exchange and both of us go away with something of greater value than we took in. Each of us goes away richer. That's the freedom that creates prosperity. That simple exchange, whether it's for a cup of coffee or a multibillion-dollar acquisition, is what creates wealth.

But now suppose some third party butts its nose into this transaction: Oh, no, the coffee has got to be between 110 and 130 degrees and it has to include a swizzle stick; it has to be consumed more than 25 feet from the point of sale. And on and on and on. Every one of these restrictions reduces the value of that exchange for the one or the both of us.

That's the fundamental problem that we face today. Our government has not only failed to protect the freedom that creates prosperity, but it has become destructive of that freedom. To create jobs, we must restore prosperity; and to restore prosperity, we must restore freedom. We must restore the freedom of choice that gives consumers the ultimate say over the output of our economy. In a free and prosperous society, consumers vote every day with their own dollars on what kind of light bulbs they prefer or on how they want to get to work or what foods they like or how much water they want to put in their toilets or what kind of cars they want or what kind of housing they desire. These consumer choices signal every day what things are actually worth and what our economy will actually produce.

Government is destroying the elegant simplicity of this process, and Congress must reverse this destruction. We must restore the freedom of individuals to enjoy the fruits of their own labor so that they can make these decisions for themselves once again. That's why excessive government spending is so destructive to prosperity. It destroys the freedom of individuals to make their own decisions over what to spend and where to invest their own money. It robs them of both the ability and the incentives to create prosperity.

Presidents like Coolidge, Truman, Reagan, and Clinton, who have reduced government spending relative to GDP, all produced dramatic increases in productivity and prosperity and the general welfare of our Nation. And Presidents like Hoover, Roosevelt, Bush, and Obama, who have increased government spending relative to GDP, all produced or prolonged or deepened periods of economic recession and hardship and malaise. Our government is now embarked upon the latter course, and this Congress must reverse this direction.

Government has an important role to play in the marketplace. It's there to ensure that representations are accurate and that contracts are enforced. You have to tell the truth. You have to keep your promises. And government has an important role to play in ensuring that. Government exists to ensure that the currency is stable and reliable and that property rights are secure. When it fulfills this fundamental role, it maximizes the freedom that a buyer and seller have to assess their own needs and resources and to make those exchanges that allow both to go away better off than they were.

Madam Speaker, let us together revive and restore the freedom and prosperity of this Nation and fulfill that sacred command inscribed on our Liberty Bell: "To proclaim liberty throughout all the land, and unto all the inhabitants thereof."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### REPEAL OF HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ENGEL. This coming Wednesday, in really the first order of real business of the House, we are voting on health care reform repeal. The new Republican majority has decided that this is the most important issue, even though they know that it's political theater, a charade. It may pass the House, but it won't pass the Senate, and certainly the President would veto it. So this is not becoming law.