

President Obama wanted a “balanced approach” to solve our debt crisis, which means historic tax increases on job creators. We don’t need a “balanced approach,” Mr. Speaker. We need a balanced budget.

IN HONOR OF THE CHERISHED
LIFE AND CAREER OF A FINE
PHYSICIAN, DR. ROBERT
MCGUIRE

(Mrs. LUMMIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. LUMMIS. I rise today to honor the life and career of one of the finest physicians and gentlemen I have ever met, Dr. Robert McGuire of Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Dr. McGuire’s career brought to his attention and to his care thousands of women in my State, and he made their lives better, including my own. Through his skill, through his patience and attention to the people he was treating, he made the profession of medicine honorable and cherished by the people he served so well.

His career has ended so he might fight his own battles with cancer. I wish him the very best regards in his fight. I thank him for the difference he made in my life and in the lives of thousands of women in my State of Wyoming. I wish him Godspeed.

Take care, Dr. Robert McGuire.

WE MUST MOVE FORWARD, EN-
ACTING COMMONSENSE SOLU-
TIONS TO REVIVE THE AMER-
ICAN ECONOMY

(Mr. DOLD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DOLD. Our economy has seen incredibly weak economic growth over the last two quarters. Just today, we found out that manufacturing is at its lowest level in the past 2 years. My district, the 10th District of Illinois, is one of the largest manufacturing districts in our Nation, and there is no doubt that families are struggling.

I am optimistic that Washington is finally coming together and finding common ground on this debt ceiling debate. We must—I emphasize—we must move forward. Hardworking taxpayers have had enough, and I get it. We must have spending discipline here in Washington—no more budget tricks, no more accounting gimmicks, no more empty promises. American families have to tighten their belts, and they should expect that Washington will do the same. Now is the time to move forward and focus on jobs.

If we are serious about paying down the debt and increasing revenue, then we must empower job creators. Small businesses in our Nation are overburdened by economic uncertainty, government regulations and redtape. We need to implement commonsense solu-

tions that create jobs and get our economy moving again.

□ 1220

MOURNING THE LOSS OF ARMY
FIRST LIEUTENANT DIMITRI DEL
CASTILLO

(Mr. CULBERSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, the duty we perform today to cut and cap America’s spending, to put us on track to a balanced budget, and to pass a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution are vitally important but pale in comparison to the sacrifices and duties of our Armed Forces, our men and women in uniform.

It is with profound sadness today that I join with the family and friends and the neighbors of United States Army First Lieutenant Dimitri del Castillo in mourning his loss. On June 25, 2011, he was killed while fighting in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

In 2004, it was my privilege to nominate Dimitri for an appointment as a cadet to the United States Military Academy at West Point. Upon his graduation, he was commissioned in the Infantry, where he sought out the Army’s toughest challenges immediately. He graduated from the demanding Airborne and Ranger courses and later passed a series of rigorous skill and endurance tests to earn the Army’s coveted Expert Infantryman Badge.

Dimitri deployed with his unit to Afghanistan in April of 2011, and while conducting combat operations he was tragically killed when his unit came under fire by enemy forces. For his heroic actions that day, Dimitri was awarded posthumously the Bronze Star Medal and the Purple Heart.

Though we mourn his loss, we are immensely proud of Dimitri’s accomplishments and we are immensely proud of the men and women who fight for us every day to make it possible to savour the freedom left to us by our founders. May the Lord bless and keep Dimitri’s soul, and may God help his family find comfort in the nobility and valor of his deeds.

COAL-POWERED ENERGY

(Mr. SHIMKUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, we are in an historic heat wave in this country, and I’m not talking about the debate on the debt limit, I’m actually talking about the temperature outside. And what’s noted is that many leaders throughout this country—whether they’re local Mayors or Governors—are saying, if you’re poor, get to a cooling shelter, stay inside, stay in the air conditioning.

Well, we’re fortunate in this country to have low-cost power generated by coal. In rural Illinois, the average salary is \$58,000 a year, the average utility bill is \$121 a month, which means they pay about \$1,500 a year for the utility cost. However, in France, they pay 20 cents per kilowatt hour. Just think what the cost would be here if we had to double our electricity rates.

Talk about a burden on the poor and rural Americans when, instead of \$1,500 a year, they would have to pay \$3,000 a year just to seek relief from these hot summers.

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

(Mr. SCALISE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, as we are dealing with this debate over the debt limit, I think one thing that’s become clear as people have followed over the last few weeks is that Washington has a spending problem. And regardless of the resolution of today’s action in the House and Senate, I hope nobody thinks that this is the end of this debate. Frankly, this is just the beginning of the debate to finally cut spending in Washington and put real controls in place.

I think as we look over the next few months, we need to continue to push for a balanced budget amendment to our Constitution because ultimately that’s the kind of accountability that we need to ensure that we change the culture of spending in Washington. Clearly, tax cuts will not solve this problem, that will only make matters worse; but if the problem is spending, why would you want to send even more money up to Washington to let them spend even more?

We’ve got to control spending; we’ve got to start making cuts today; but we ultimately need that accountability that comes with a balanced budget amendment.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

SUSPENDING IMMIGRATION STA-
TUS PETITION AND INTERVIEW
TIME REQUIREMENT FOR MEM-
BERS OF ARMED FORCES

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 398) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to toll, during active-duty service abroad in the

Armed Forces, the periods of time to file a petition and appear for an interview to remove the conditional basis for permanent resident status, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 398

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. TOLLING PERIODS OF TIME TO FILE PETITION AND HAVE INTERVIEW FOR REMOVAL OF CONDITION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 216 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1186a) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (g) as subsection (h); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (f) the following:

“(g) SERVICE IN ARMED FORCES.—

“(1) FILING PETITION.—The 90-day period described in subsection (d)(2)(A) shall be tolled during any period of time in which the alien spouse or petitioning spouse is a member of the Armed Forces of the United States and serving abroad in an active-duty status in the Armed Forces, except that, at the option of the petitioners, the petition may be filed during such active-duty service at any time after the commencement of such 90-day period.

“(2) PERSONAL INTERVIEW.—The 90-day period described in the first sentence of subsection (d)(3) shall be tolled during any period of time in which the alien spouse or petitioning spouse is a member of the Armed Forces of the United States and serving abroad in an active-duty status in the Armed Forces, except that nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to prohibit the Secretary of Homeland Security from waiving the requirement for an interview under subsection (c)(1)(B) pursuant to the Secretary's authority under the second sentence of subsection (d)(3).”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 216(a)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1186a(a)(1)) is amended—

(A) by striking “(g)(1)” and inserting “(h)(1)”;

(B) by striking “(g)(2)” and inserting “(h)(2)”.

(2) REFERENCES.—Section 216 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1186a) is amended—

(A) in subsection (d)(3), by striking “Attorney General's” and inserting “Secretary's”;

(B) by striking “Attorney General” each place such term appears and inserting “Secretary of Homeland Security”;

(C) in subsections (c)(1)(B) and (d)(3), by striking “Service” and inserting “Department of Homeland Security”.

SEC. 2. COMPLIANCE WITH PAYGO.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the House of Representatives, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from California (Ms. ZOE LOFGREN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 398, currently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I support this bill, which provides relief to military servicemembers serving overseas who marry foreign spouses.

Our Nation's military should not have to worry about red tape while they are abroad protecting our freedoms. When a U.S. citizen or permanent resident marries a foreign spouse, that spouse becomes a conditional permanent resident. After 2 years, the couple files a petition with the Department of Homeland Security for the removal of the conditional status. If the petition is successful, the immigrant becomes a permanent resident.

The petition generally must be filed before the second anniversary of the spouse's becoming a conditional permanent resident.

Upon the filing of the petition, DHS interviews the couple to determine whether there was any marriage fraud. The interview must be conducted unless DHS waives the deadline for the interview or the requirement for the interview.

This timetable is reasonable under normal circumstances. However, what happens when the U.S. citizen or permanent resident spouse is serving overseas in active duty status in the Armed Forces?

It would certainly be a disruption to the military to have a member of the Armed Forces deployed overseas travel for a personal interview with DHS. Our military's focus should be on defending freedom, not bureaucracy.

While it is true that DHS can choose to delay this process in appropriate circumstances, this bill's provision should be standard policy while the spouse is serving abroad. Of course, the petition and interview would still take place when the spouse is no longer on active duty.

This bill is good for our military, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As the author of H.R. 398, I support this bill. It's a small measure to help support members of our Armed Forces who are serving overseas and their families here at home.

Our troops, who take up our country's call to service and volunteer to place themselves in harm's way, face uncertainties every day. For countless soldiers, the peace of mind that they

get from family back home helps to keep them focused on the important job at hand. For that reason, it is critical that we not add to their burdens and instead seize the opportunity to alleviate even a small amount of the anxiety they feel.

As the chairman has indicated, there is a conditionality placed on residents gained through marriage. Couples are given a 90-day period just before the second anniversary of the grant to file to remove the conditions, and then they get only 90 days to appear in person for an interview. Now, only after this is done are the conditions removed. And if the conditional status is not removed in this way, the residence is terminated and the foreign national spouse could be deported. That means that either the spouse of one of our soldiers could be deported or the soldier himself could be deported.

Now, it's pretty hard to appear for the interview if you're serving in Iraq, and we certainly don't want our soldiers or their spouses to be deported. So I support this measure.

In 2008, as chairwoman of the House Immigration Subcommittee, I convened a hearing on the immigration needs of America's fighting men and women. At the hearing, we heard from members of the Armed Forces about countless challenges that they face because of our rigid and unyielding immigration system.

□ 1230

This bill will help to resolve just one of those challenges. It will not excuse military families from the requirements. It will simply allow them to put off those requirements if they choose during overseas deployments.

Of course, there are many problems with our country's immigration laws that this bill does not address, too many to count. And as we know from our 2008 hearing, those problems will continue to unnecessarily tear military families apart, distract from our mission abroad, and betray the fundamental values that we claim to hold dear.

But despite this great need, it is only this small bill, a bill that should help a few dozen servicemembers a year, that is on the floor for action.

I commend my colleagues LAMAR SMITH, ELTON GALLEGLY, and JOHN CONYERS for joining me in introducing this very modest measure.

Our men and women on the front lines are standing in defense of our country, and their loved ones back home stand in defense of them. As Members of Congress, it's both a responsibility and an honor to provide whatever support we can. And while this bill may be small, it is important for the few dozen soldiers it may help each year. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 398.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

NON-IMMIGRANT NURSES VISA REAUTHORIZATION

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1933) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to modify the requirements for admission of non-immigrant nurses in health professional shortage areas, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1933

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION OF NONIMMIGRANT NURSES IN HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGE AREAS.

(a) EXTENSION OF PERIOD OF AUTHORIZED ADMISSION.—Section 212(m)(3) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(m)(3)) is amended to read as follows:

“(3) The initial period of authorized admission as a nonimmigrant under section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(c) shall be 3 years, and may be extended once for an additional 3-year period.”.

(b) NUMBER OF VISAS.—Section 212(m)(4) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(m)(4)) is amended by striking “500.” and inserting “300.”.

(c) PORTABILITY.—Section 214(n) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1184(n)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(3)(A) A nonimmigrant alien described in subparagraph (B) who was previously issued a visa or otherwise provided nonimmigrant status under section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(c) is authorized to accept new employment performing services as a registered nurse for a facility described in section 212(m)(6) upon the filing by the prospective employer of a new petition on behalf of such nonimmigrant as provided under subsection (c). Employment authorization shall continue for such alien until the new petition is adjudicated. If the new petition is denied, such authorization shall cease.

“(B) A nonimmigrant alien described in this paragraph is a nonimmigrant alien—

“(i) who has been lawfully admitted into the United States;

“(ii) on whose behalf an employer has filed a nonfrivolous petition for new employment before the date of expiration of the period of stay authorized by the Secretary of Homeland Security, except that, if a nonimmigrant described in section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(c) is terminated or laid off by the nonimmigrant’s employer, or otherwise ceases employment with the employer, such petition for new employment shall be filed during the 45-day period beginning on the date of such termination, lay off, or cessation; and

“(iii) who, subsequent to such lawful admission, has not been employed without authorization in the United States before the filing of such petition.”.

(d) APPLICABILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—During the 3-year period beginning on the commencement date described in paragraph (2), the amendments made by section 2 of the Nursing Relief for Disadvantaged Areas Act of 1999 (Public Law 106-95), and the amendments made by this section, shall apply to classification petitions filed for nonimmigrant status. This period shall be in addition to the period described in section 2(e) of the Nursing Relief for Disadvantaged Areas Act of 1999.

(2) COMMENCEMENT DATE.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall determine whether regulations are necessary to implement the amendments made by this section. If the Secretary determines that no such regulations are necessary, the commencement date described in this paragraph shall be the date of such determination. If the Secretary determines that regulations are necessary to implement any amendment made by this section, the commencement date described in this paragraph shall be the date on which such regulations (in final form) take effect.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ZOE LOFGREN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of Texas. I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1933, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I offer this legislation on behalf of myself and Representatives CUELLAR, HINOJOSA, ROSKAM, and RUSH.

A number of American hospitals have great difficulty attracting nurses. These include hospitals that serve mostly poor patients in inner-city neighborhoods and some hospitals in rural areas. For example, St. Bernard Hospital in Chicago is the only remaining hospital in an area of over 100,000 people and almost all of its patients live in poverty. St. Bernard almost closed its doors in 1992 primarily because of its inability to attract registered nurses.

Congress passed the Nursing Relief for Disadvantaged Areas Act in 1999 to help hospitals like St. Bernard. It created a new H-1C temporary registered nurse visa program with 500 visas available each year that allowed nurses to stay for 3 years.

To be able to petition for a foreign nurse, an employer had to meet four conditions. First, the employer had to be located in a health professional shortage area; second, the employer had to have at least 190 acute care beds; third, a certain percentage of the employer’s patients had to be Medicare patients; and fourth, a certain percentage of patients had to be Medicaid patients.

The H-1C program adopted the protections for American nurses contained in the expired H-1A nursing visa program. For instance, a hospital had to agree to take timely and significant steps to recruit American nurses. Also, hospitals had to pay the prevailing wage.

The H-1C program contained new protections such as requirements that foreign nurses could not comprise more than one-third of a hospital’s registered nurses. The H-1C program was extended in 2006 but expired in December of 2009, though many nurses still remain on 3-year visas issued before that date.

Sister Elizabeth Van Straten, president of St. Bernard Hospital, wrote to me last December that “because of the sunset, in combination with the extended approval period for green cards, nurses are now forced to leave our institution, and the rate of loss continues to increase. This loss cannot be sustained. As the only hospital serving one of the most difficult sections of Chicago, and perhaps the entire country, we need the extension of the visa program to survive.”

I introduced H.R. 1933 to help St. Bernard and other, similar hospitals. The bill reauthorizes the H-1C program for another 3 years. The number of visas that may be issued in each fiscal year cannot exceed 300. An alien may be admitted for 3 years, and this stay may be extended once for an additional 3 years.

The H-1C program ensures continued care for patients in inner-city and rural communities. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I will not repeat the information provided by Chairman SMITH. I will simply state that the H-1C program was first created in 1999 to address shortages in both rural and inner-city hospitals. The 500 visas per year actually only go to 14 hospitals in the United States spread out across America. And of course the program has now expired.

As Chairman SMITH has indicated, this bill would reauthorize but reduce the number from 500 to 300, create certain other protections as mentioned by the chairman, and allow the maximum stay to go to 6 years. Because the bill would double the duration of H-1C status, I offered an amendment in committee, which was accepted by all, to make the H-1C visas portable among the 14 hospitals authorized to employ H-1C nurses. Right now, the nurses are entirely dependent on their employers to provide them their immigration status, and visa portability would level the playing field and allow a nurse to switch employers if something was wrong.

I appreciate the Chairman’s willingness to accept that, and I thank the chairman for introducing this bill and working with me to ensure that H-1C