

has gotten back \$3.4 billion in fees from the loans they make.

So where are we?

Fifty countries in the world do this. China is using every tool available to it, including this one; but the House Republicans sit over there with their heads stuck in the sand, and we're about a month away from it expiring. We should increase the amount of money we allow the Export-Import Bank to use. Remember, the Export-Import Bank makes money on extremely low-risk loans to support tens of thousands of jobs in the United States. Why aren't we working on this kind of jobs legislation? Well, it's because the President asked for it. They are so determined, Mr. Speaker, to prevent the President from being re-elected that they won't do what's good for American business and what's good for American workers.

This is not partisan. These small companies are all over our districts. They want to make loans. They want to make sales overseas. They need the help of this bank, and the Republican leadership sits—I don't know where they are. They're somewhere in a dark room. Somebody should turn on the light and tell them there is some stuff to be done and to get out here and pass a real bill, not this jobs cockamamie thing we're going to do in a few days about repackaging stuff we've already passed.

WOMEN'S ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. This is a month that we note as celebrating women and women's history as a major component of the wonderful history of the greatest Nation in the world. How proud we are of a Nation that supports people's rights no matter your walk of life or religious background or ethnic background; and how proud we are now in 2012 to note that there are men and women on the front lines, on the battlefields defending America's freedom.

So I rise today to continue my advocacy for women's rights. I note that I have been a proponent of women's rights from the earliest part of my career as a lawyer, as a civic participant, as a civilian in my hometown of Houston, as a mother, certainly as a wife, and as a public servant now as a Member of the United States Congress.

I am delighted to acknowledge the Congressional Women's Caucus and to note that the mission of the Women's Caucus is to improve the lives of women and their families. Since 1977, the caucus has focused on issues that are pertinent to women—from fair credit to child support, equitable pay, retirement income, preventing domestic violence at home and internationally, and of course preventing sexual assault.

So I rise today with a degree of consternation and a resounding stand

against the siege and onslaught of women's access to health care. Let me be very clear: women's access to health care is not a battle about a woman's choice or the utilization of contraceptives or family planning. It is, simply, women's access to health care. The issue of birth control is an issue of women's health care. Let me give you a recent study's commentary by the National Women's Law Center:

It found that 25-year-old women have been charged up to 84 percent more than their male contemporaries for individual health plans that specifically exclude maternity coverage. Let me be very clear: 84 percent higher than a male's plan to allow a woman to have access to health care. Therein lies the purpose of the Affordable Care Act—not individual mandates but to be able to even the playing field for women's health care. Therefore, let me indicate that using or not using birth control or family planning is an individual matter, but you cannot obtain those without a prescription. It should be a decision between a woman, her conscience, her doctor, and certainly her faith. So I wish to address the recent tenor of the debate on birth control.

A young law student, Sandra Fluke, came before this body, before the Members of Congress, and testified regarding coverage for family planning and contraceptives. She was then publicly derailed as being a slut and a prostitute. I would hope the days of derogatory terms to silence women's opinions are over forever, particularly when they speak about truth. She recounted the story of a young friend who lost an ovary.

Let me repeat: she, Ms. Fluke, recounted a story of a young friend who lost an ovary due to polycystic ovarian fibroids, which can be managed by contraceptives through prescription. Unfortunately, that young woman could not afford contraceptives and had to endure terrible pain. As a result of asking for help to address female law students' health concerns, Ms. Fluke, in coming to this body as an American citizen, as is her right to petition and speak to the Members of Congress, was called a slut and a prostitute by an entertainment talk-show host.

Calling women these sorts of names is no more than vile, underhanded and a way of defeating one's right to speak. I don't deny the right of entertainers and talk-show entertainers and flamboyant conversationalists to speak all day, but there has to be a defining moment of dignity and respect to anyone's disagreement. So I hope more and more advertisers will recognize that a woman's power is greater than the individual entertainer's power. Drop off of that show. Drop off one by one, day by day. Leave them to the old-fashioned medicine of the 1800s—the pills that will cure all. Let the old doc medicine be their advertisers. That's about the level that they should be at.

Women's health is so very important; and at some point, reproductive health

is very much a part of it. Polycystic ovarian syndrome is helped by contraceptives. Mr. Speaker, all of these—endometriosis, the lack of menstrual periods, menstrual cramps, premenstrual syndrome—are helped by treatment and access to women's health.

Let me finally say in conclusion that when you cut Medicaid, you cut poor women's access to health care. I will stand and fight for women's access to health care and their own decisions because it is part of the American way. So let us stand together, united as a Nation, being fair and open to all opinions, but never denying a woman, along with every other American, access to health care.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 9 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

God of the universe, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

Lord, You have promised to be with all people wherever they are, whatever their need. We reach out in prayer for the homeless, the poor, those anxious about the future, those who are ill, or those to whom freedom has been denied.

Bless the Members of this people's House. Inspire them as representatives of the American people to labor for justice and righteousness in our Nation and our world, mindful of Your concern for those most in need.

For all the riches of our human experience, O Lord, we give You thanks. Make us aware of our responsibilities as stewards of Your divine gifts and empower us with Your grace to faithfully and earnestly use our talents in ways that bring understanding to our communities and our Nation and peace to every soul.

May all we do be done for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1886. An act to prevent trafficking in counterfeit drugs.

The message also announced, that pursuant to the provisions of S. Con. Res. 35 (One Hundred Twelfth Congress), the Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, appoints the following Senators to the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies:

The Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID);

The Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER); and

The Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER).

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

PORTS CAUCUS

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last week, Congresswoman JANICE HAHN (CA) and I hosted the inaugural event for the bipartisan congressional PORTS Caucus.

The PORTS Caucus currently includes a bipartisan group of 42 Members of Congress, representing 19 States and two territories.

I represent several ports in southeast Texas, and I am pleased that our Nation's ports now have a voice in Congress. Ms. HAHN represents ports on the west coast.

Ports are critical to our national security and our economic security. They are America's link to the rest of the world, whether it's the food we eat, the car we drive, the light bulb we use in our homes, or the clothes we wear. Every American household is impacted by some activity at our ports.

The PORTS Caucus will raise awareness and educate others about the major issues important to American ports.

I look forward to working with Congresswoman HAHN, and I want to thank her for thinking of this idea; I look forward to working with other Members of Congress to ensure economic growth in America.

And that's just the way it is.

GIRL SCOUTS OF RHODE ISLAND

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

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Girl Scouts of Rhode Island, a program that strives to help young girls become model citizens.

In honor of the 100th anniversary of the Girl Scouts of America, as well as National Women's History Month, I'm pleased to recognize the contributions that the Girl Scouts have made in Rhode Island where it has reached 9,400 girls through its 770 troops in the past year.

More than just going door to door selling Thin Mints and Tagalongs to their friends and neighbors, the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island provide young women and girls across our State with the opportunity to take part in a group that builds girls of honor, confidence, courage, and character who make the world a better place and giving them a foundation for success later in life.

The Girl Scouts of Rhode Island should take great pride in the work they do every day.

I congratulate the Girl Scouts of Rhode Island on their incredible work.

CBO PROJECTS HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT UNTIL 2014

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, last month the Congressional Budget Office released a report which stated that our Nation's unemployment rate is not expected to dip below 8 percent until 2014, which reveals the President's policies have failed and destroyed jobs. America is experiencing the longest stretch of high unemployment since the Great Depression. The study also concluded that if every American searching for employment were counted, sadly our unemployment rate would be around 15 percent.

When the President lobbied for his economic plan, he promised that our unemployment rate would not exceed 8 percent. Instead, February marks the 36th month where the unemployment rate has been above 8 percent. This is a tragedy for American families.

House Republicans are focused on putting American families back to work. I urge the President and the liberal-controlled Senate to take immediate action of the dozens of job-creation bills that have passed the House with bipartisan support.

In conclusion, God bless our troops and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address

the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last Friday, March 2, 2012, marked Texas Independence Day.

It was 176 years ago that the Texas Declaration of Independence was ratified by the convention of 1836 at Washington-on-the-Brazos, Texas.

A military dictatorship took over Mexico, abolishing the Mexican Constitution. The dictatorship refused to provide trial by jury, freedom of religion, public education for its citizens, and allowed the confiscation of firearms. The last one being the most intolerable, particularly among Texans.

Failure to provide these basic rights violated the sacred contract between a government and its people. Texas did what we still do today, stood up for our rights. In response, the Mexican Army marched to Texas, waging a war on the land and the people, enforcing the decrees of the military dictatorship through brute force and without any democratic legitimacy.

As future Texas President and Governor Sam Houston, along with other delegates, signed the Texas Declaration of Independence, General Santa Anna's army besieged the independence forces at the Alamo in San Antonio.

Yesterday, March 6, 176 years ago, 4 days after the signing, the Alamo fell with Lieutenant Colonel William Barrett Travis, former Tennessee Congressman David Crockett, and approximately 200 other Texas defenders.

In a dramatic turnaround, Texans achieved their independence several weeks later on April 21, 1836. Roughly 900 members of the Texas Army overpowered a larger Mexican force. I'm proud to represent the San Jacinto Battlefield and State Park.

God bless Texas and God bless America.

THE JOBS ACT

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

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, today we're considering a bipartisan legislative package called the JOBS Act, Jumpstart Our Business Startups. This is what our constituents want us to do, and they want to see us get it done.

The JOBS Act is a legislative package designed to move our economy and restore opportunities for America's primary job creators, our small businesses, start-ups, and entrepreneurs. These measures create capital formation, will spur the growth of start-ups and small businesses, and pave the way for more small-scale businesses to go public and create more jobs.

As I said, this has broad bipartisan support. Of the six bills, only 32 Members voted "no" on all six of these bills as they moved through the House and the committee.

In his State of the Union, the President asked us to send him a bill that