

this time, with this kind of clear and blatant political agenda at the core of this debate.

What we need is a real, substantive discussion about solutions to keep Medicare costs, and medical malpractice costs as well, under control for the long term. But with today's floor action, these needed discussions are too likely to get lost in a sea of shouting.

And that's not what we need right now.

If my colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to work with us to address the concerns that many of us have with IPAB, to make changes, then I'm willing to meet them halfway.

But if they want to blame the Affordable Care Act for everything wrong in the world, even when it has controlled costs so well that IPAB won't even come into play for years to come, and even when it has given millions of American families control back over their health care, I can't join them in these political attacks.

So I have to oppose passage of this bill today.

HONORING THE LIFE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE SHENOUDA III

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2012

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, this month, the world laid to rest a holy and wise spiritual leader, His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, the 117th Pope of Alexandria and the Patriarch of All Africa on the Holy Apostolic Seat of Saint Mark the Evangelist of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria and head of The Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria, who passed from this life on March 17, 2012.

His Holiness Pope Shenouda III presided more than 40 years over a worldwide expansion of the Coptic Orthodox Church. During his papacy, he appointed the first-ever bishops to preside over North American dioceses. When His Holiness became pope in 1971, there were only four churches in North America. Today there are over 100.

Pope Shenouda III was well known for his deep commitment to ecumenism and interfaith dialogue. He believed that Christian unity was a matter of faith rather than of jurisdiction. In 1973, Pope Shenouda III became the first Coptic Orthodox Pope of Alexandria to meet the Roman Catholic Pope in over 1500 years. In this visit, Pope Shenouda III and Pope Paul VI signed a common declaration on the issue of Christology and agreed to further discussions on Christian unity. He led dialogues with various Protestant churches as well as Islamic clerics and Muslim leaders worldwide.

In an address he gave at an ecumenical forum during the International Week of Prayer in 1974, he declared, "The whole Christian world is anxious to see the church unite. Christian people, being fed up with divisions, are pushing their church leaders to do something about church unity and I am sure that the Holy Spirit is inspiring us."

A biographer aptly described Pope Shenouda III as "A distinguished and promi-

nent religious leader, a profound theologian, a gifted preacher, a talented author, a spiritual father, a man of God his entire life. He devoted his writings, teachings and actions to spread and propagate for the rules of understanding, peace, dialogue and forgiveness."

I had the unforgettable honor of meeting Pope Shenouda III as our local Coptic Christian Church in Northern Ohio was being constructed. He was a man of immense faith, great humanity, and deep intellect. When I asked him about future unity among various faith confessions, I will never forget his steady, strong countenance as he advised me "that would take love." He was a very profound man.

President Obama called Pope Shenouda III "a beloved leader of Egypt's Coptic Christians and an advocate for tolerance and religious dialogue," and said he will be remembered "as a man of deep faith, a leader of a great faith, and an advocate for unity and reconciliation." The faith community around the world and people of good will everywhere joins the Coptic Orthodox Church in mourning the passing of Pope Shenouda III from this life. We extend our sympathy to church members worldwide and in our own community. His contributions to world understanding and bridging horizons yet unmet will flower in decades hence. May God bless his soul and allow his unfinished work to progress in his memory.

[From The New York Times, Mar. 20, 2012]

THOUSANDS MOURN COPTIC POPE IN CAIRO

(By Kareem Fahim)

CAIRO—In front of a tearful crowd of thousands including members of Egypt's emerging political class, a funeral service was held on Tuesday for Pope Shenouda III, the popular and charismatic leader of the Coptic Orthodox Church, who died on Saturday.

The pope's body lay in an open white casket through the emotional two-hour ceremony in St. Mark's Cathedral, where he was remembered as a "wise captain" who built bridges to Muslims and other Christian denominations and who strengthened the identity of the church, especially among its younger members. Hundreds more people stood outside the cathedral, unable to gain entry to the invitation-only service.

The scene turned to pandemonium later in the day when thousands of people mobbed a van carrying the pope's body to his burial site, in a monastery in northern Egypt. Red-faced military policemen wrestled with mourners carrying the pope's portrait who were straining for a last glimpse of him through the dark windows of the white van.

The flood of grief for the only pope many Egyptian Copts had ever known—he was enthroned in 1971—underscored feelings of unease that many Christians have felt in the ongoing tumult of Egypt's political transition. Roughly 1 in 10 Egyptians belong to the Coptic Orthodox Church, which was founded in the first century and was the majority religion here before the coming of Islam. In recent years, long-held complaints about anti-Coptic discrimination have been replaced by deeper fears that Islamist parties will further marginalize the Christian population as they try to refashion Egypt into a more observant Muslim state.

For most of his four decades as patriarch, Pope Shenouda managed a delicate balancing act, strongly supporting President Hosni Mubarak in exchange for a measure of protection as the pope strengthened the church's power and reach. He was broadly

popular among Egyptians, and was especially well-known for his wit. He was also seen as rigid defender of a conservative church, and some Copts faulted him for resisting reform.

Criticism of Pope Shenouda's relationship with Mr. Mubarak became more pronounced after the popular uprising against Mr. Mubarak's rule took hold in January 2011, with attacks on churches and Coptic protesters, by hardline Islamists and the government's troops following behind. Since the pope's death, though, that criticism has been laced with sadness.

"I don't disagree that he interfered with politics," said Mina Samy, a 30-year old physician outside St. Mark's on Tuesday. "But when he spoke, he did it for Egypt's best interest, not for his personal interests, like others do."

"I'm hoping for another copy of him," he said. "Nothing is too much for God. He was a great scholar, and he led the church through major crisis. He left us at a time when Egypt needed him."

HONORING BILL KEFFLER OF RICHARDSON, TEXAS FOR 35 YEARS OF OUTSTANDING PUBLIC SERVICE

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2012

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, with great appreciation for his selfless public service, I rise to recognize before the U.S. House of Representatives Bill Keffler of Richardson, Texas on the occasion of his retirement.

Bill's résumé of accomplishments closely matches that of the City of Richardson itself. During his 35-year career with the City, 17 as city manager, he has played an integral role in bringing first-rate transportation entities, higher education institutions, healthcare providers, and corporations to Richardson. Under his watch, the City has also received countless awards for its responsible, transparent, and innovative administration.

Those of us who have been fortunate enough to work with Bill know him as a true leader not just in Richardson, but in the entire North Texas region. A current member of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee for the North Texas Commission, Bill is also the immediate past-president of the Texas City Manager's Association and an advisory board member for Methodist Richardson Medical Center, Leadership Richardson, and the University of Texas at Dallas Development Office, to name a few.

Bill, a mix of Irish Green and Raider Red, kicked off his stellar career back in 1977 having already obtained a bachelor's degree in government at Notre Dame and a master's degree in public administration at Texas Tech University. He and his wife, Chrissie, raised five great kids in Richardson. Bill's family and friendliness are considered staples in the community—as are his famous striped ties.

To Bill, thank you for all you've done to build Richardson into the city it is today. It is a pleasure to know you, and I wish you the very best in the years to come. God bless you, and I salute you.

VOTE ON THE SENATE
TRANSPORTATION BILL

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2012

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the motion to move the previous question to allow for debate and a vote on the Senate transportation bill.

With millions of Americans still unemployed through no fault of their own, what is the House considering today? In the Budget Committee, we are discussing a budget that slashes targeted investments in transportation, scientific research, and education to give additional tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans. The proposed budget also dismantles the Medicare guarantee, transferring rising costs of care to seniors. And on the House floor, we have another attempt to repeal parts of the Affordable Care Act, this time targeting a provision in the law that would address real, systemic health care costs. This is not an agenda that creates jobs or grows our economy.

Instead, we should bring forward the Senate transportation bill that received an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 74–22 last week. This bill would invest in critical infrastructure projects, supporting over 1.8 million jobs nationwide and over 28,000 in my home state of Maryland. It would help revive the construction industry, which continues to face 17.1 percent unemployment. And it would make our Nation's transportation system safer and more efficient.

Mr. Speaker, we must focus our agenda on improving the economy and putting Americans back to work. We have a bipartisan solution to do just that—let's bring it to the Floor.

SENSELESS ACTS OF VIOLENCE

HON. DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN

OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2012

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we laid to rest a young man, Deniel Brow who was killed after he turned away from an argument—shot as he began to walk away.

Every time our children are out, not only in the Virgin Islands but across the country, and certainly as we now see in Florida, we worry that they will be injured or killed in some senseless act of violence.

In the case of young Traynor Martin, he was not killed because of an argument with a peer which would have been bad enough, it appears he was pursued by an adult, allegedly, a self appointed overly aggressive neighborhood watch person who seemed to be just looking for trouble, and who even after being told by dispatchers to leave the boy alone pursued him and in the midst of his pleas for help heard on the 911 tape, shoots and kills him.

I am glad the Justice Department has begun its investigation and I thank our colleague CORRINE BROWN for getting involved and being the strong advocate she is on behalf of the grieving Martin family and his community.

But you know the blame for this incident goes beyond the shooter. All who have engaged in violent rhetoric against racial and

ethnic minorities, who have been contributing to the poisonous environment in which we now find ourselves in this country and who have been encouraging this kind of vigilante activity are also responsible for young Traynor's death and his family's loss.

I hope this incident will be a wake-up call and have us come to our senses and sense of fairness, justice and community—the kind of community that looks out for and takes care of its children, not kills them or fosters an atmosphere where this kind of action is encouraged.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF SAN JACINTO COLLEGE AND GULF COAST PASS GRANT

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2012

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contributions of San Jacinto College, a Hispanic-Serving Institution and community college located in our district which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

The mission of San Jacinto College is to deliver accessible, affordable, high-quality post-secondary education programs designed to meet the needs of the residents of Harris County.

The primary focus of the College is helping students to achieve their personal and professional goals, create seamless transitions among educational levels, and to prepare students to enter the job market or transfer to senior institutions. Through its programs and services, and partnerships with industry, the College supports the economic growth of the community and the region.

San Jacinto College recently received a grant that will fund collaborative programs with local secondary school districts focused on increasing college readiness and completion of community college developmental education courses. The grant, provided through the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas at Austin, was made possible by The Houston Endowment.

The \$1.2 million, three year grant, known as the Gulf Coast Partners Achieving Students Success, or Gulf Coast PASS, will help San Jacinto College and its partners, Pasadena and Sheldon Independent School Districts, ISDs, expand existing projects and implement new partnerships. Special focus will aim to increase college readiness and completion of community college developmental education courses where necessary.

With the help of these funds, San Jacinto College is partnering with local ISDs to start up two early college high schools, one with Pasadena ISD and another with Sheldon ISD. The Sheldon ISD Early College High School will open in Fall 2012.

The Texas Education Administration states that early college high schools must provide access to under-represented populations, lower socio-economic students, and first-in-college students to provide a pathway for higher education attainment for these students who would be less likely to pursue higher education.

Our nation must do more to close the gaps between secondary and post-secondary edu-

cation in the areas of academic experiences, expectations, and curriculum. San Jacinto College is committed to bridging these gaps by facilitating communication and collaboration between high school and college faculty to identify these gaps locally.

In order for our students to make the successful transition from high school to some kind of post-secondary experience, the College and our school districts must intentionally design programs that address those gaps. We must commit to creating multiple pathways to student success and completion of post-secondary credentials.

I am proud to rise to commend the work of San Jacinto College, which provides a model of excellence in higher education for the people of Harris County and the nation.

PROTECTING ACCESS TO
HEALTHCARE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2012

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5) to improve patient access to health care services and provide improved medical care by reducing the excessive burden the liability system places on the health care delivery system:

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Chair, the people have sent us up here to legislate and pass laws that will benefit and protect the American public and move our country forward. It is more than disheartening, it is shameful that once again we find ourselves here today wasting time to vote on a piece of partisan, Republican legislation that has no hope of moving beyond this chamber. H.R. 5 does nothing to benefit the American people, nor does this Act do anything to protect access to healthcare as its name declares.

Even worse, this misguided legislation is being considered during the same week we are celebrating the second anniversary of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). I am unbelievably proud of that fact that the bill I authored has guaranteed that 105 million Americans no longer face lifetime limits on their insurance, 2 million young adults are now insured under their parents' plans, and seniors no longer find themselves lost in the "coverage gap" and lacking access to prescription drugs. With all of these tangible, quantifiable benefits, why are my colleagues on the other side of the aisle spending their time attempting to dismantle a law that is already being implemented? Why do they spend their time trying to chip away at it piece by piece when they could be working on legislation that would benefit their constituents? Working to repeal the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB) and not even bothering to come up with any sort of replacement seems dubious and makes no sense to me. But then again, I am just a poor, Polish lawyer from Detroit.

Not only are my Republican friends attempting to repeal IPAB, they have added it to their medical malpractice legislation, H.R. 5, which contains provisions that they have brought time and again to this floor, failing every time. Each time they resurrect the same language.