

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.

In doing so, they do not demonstrate genuine interest in legislating on behalf of the American people. The Republicans know the Senate will not vote for such a bill. Nor will I. I will not approve a bill that caps non-economic medical malpractice damages at \$250,000. Apparently, this is the price the Republicans put on a lifetime of physical impairment, pain, suffering and even wrongful death.

I know our medical malpractice system needs improvement. If only my Republican friends would come to me with a third way, a new fair and workable way, to approach this problem. I would be more than happy to work with them on a bipartisan basis, which this Congress so desperately needs right now.

But, until that time, I am forced to vote against this piece of legislation. I will not approve of a bill that reshapes the same old medical malpractice language. I will not vote for a bill that attempts to wear down bits of the Affordable Care Act. If they had their way, the Republicans would repeal the entire ACA, and take away insurance from over 30 million Americans. Instead, we are busy granting insurance coverage to 17 million children with pre-existing conditions.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2012

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, due to the sudden passing away of my father, I was unable to participate in House floor votes on March 22, 2012.

THE CURRENT SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2012

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, tragic events in the last few weeks in Afghanistan have underscored the messages I have continuously emphasized in Congress in the past. As long as we pursue military solutions to the unrest in Afghanistan while foregoing attention to economic, political and social solutions, security will remain elusive. Our military service officers are heroes, but we are failing them as we continue to pursue a strategy that lacks proper understanding of both the social constructs of the Afghan people and the meaning of peace.

It is our duty as Americans to give the people of Afghanistan what they want, not what we want to give them. Afghan citizens want peace, they want security and they want the right to self-determination based on their own social, cultural, and religious values. Afghans do not want to be at the constant risk of night raids and air strikes that could kill their friends and neighbors, checkpoints and security barriers that keep their families apart, or incidences of violence which sometimes involve International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troops and contract security forces. And they certainly do not want foreigners burning the Holy Quran, which all Muslims hold as dear as life, or have their very own

safety compromised by foreign forces who should be there to protect them.

As members of the United States government, we also owe the American people what they want, and not what we want to give them. In this regard, we are failing our own people as they face the difficulties brought on by the global economic crisis while lives, money and resources are being wasted abroad in an effort which has, sadly, led to resentment and the incitement of hatred against America.

Last week, the Department of Defense Comptroller confirmed one of our worst kept secrets—that the deployment of one soldier to Afghanistan for one year costs \$850,000. We currently have 90,000 soldiers deployed in Afghanistan. Additionally, we have 1,142 U.S. civilians from the State Department and other non-defense agencies currently in Afghanistan, and each civilian costs taxpayers \$570,000 per year, according to the most recent estimate from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction. Furthermore, in 2011, our taxpayers spent \$11.2 billion to pay, train and equip Afghanistan's security force. Over the past ten years the U.S. has spent more than \$550 billion in Afghanistan alone, or about \$1 billion per week.

A new Washington Post poll finds that sixty percent of American voters feel that the war was not worth fighting. It also finds that, for the first time, Republican voters are "evenly split" on the wisdom of continuing this war. This is what America wants, and it is our duty to respect that.

Last year, as co-chairman of the Congressional Progressive Caucus's Peace and Security Taskforce, I urged President Obama to bring about the swift, safe and responsible withdrawal of U.S. troops and military contractors from Afghanistan. We asked for plans for a significant drawdown, beginning no later than July of this year.

We welcome the news that Congress's calls to the White House have finally been heard. On February 1, 2012, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said that while American troops will still leave Afghanistan by the end of 2014, plans were laid out so that by late next year, U.S. and NATO troops in Afghanistan will switch from a combat role to a training mission. The Administration may further want to take heed of the same Washington Post poll which revealed that fifty-four percent of all voters want the U.S. to withdraw troops even faster than the President's 2014 timetable.

As we look forward to our future role as global leaders of peace and security, we must not forget our past and present mistakes. Our international affairs priorities must be anchored in the recognition that our national security is inextricably linked to our economic vitality. We cannot fight for global security but ignore the economic security of the people of America. We need a budget that reflects the fact that diplomacy and development prevents wars, because smart security can lead to global stability at a fraction of the cost, freeing up funds to engage in nation building here at home. As we look forward to the question of how to handle future matters in the Middle East, these are the priorities that we simply cannot afford to forget.

Mr. Speaker, Peace and Security are created through a well-functioning government, a fair and prosperous economy, and a harmonious society. We have failed the Afghan people on each and every one of these fronts,

and in so doing, we, we have also failed ourselves and our constituents. As we reflect on the recent military tragedies in Afghanistan, we must ask ourselves how many more apologies we can afford to offer.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE
TOWNSQUAREBUZZ FOUNDATION
AND PARTNERS: HONORING
THOSE WHO SERVE

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2012

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to recognize the TownSquareBuzz Foundation and the City of McKinney, Texas, as they join forces to declare Red Shirt Fridays in McKinney.

The Foundation's "Paint McKinney Red!" campaign was launched last year to raise awareness about the unique challenges veterans face when they return from war.

To date, TownSquareBuzz has printed 500 red t-shirts that are being sold by 10 local partner businesses. The shirts remind us, "Honor Those Who Serve: Past, Present, Future," and all sale proceeds go directly to the local Community Lifeline Center in McKinney.

The Lifeline Center's great operation serves folks in need in 17 cities across Collin County. Its veterans-support initiative, funded in part by a grant from the Texas Veterans Commission, helps local veterans and their families with housing, utilities, medical and dental treatment, transportation, counseling, and job training, to name a few.

Inspired by the nationwide Red Shirt Fridays project, the local efforts of TownSquareBuzz and the City of McKinney will provide direct assistance to our friends, family members, and neighbors who are the returning heroes of today's military campaigns.

These brave men and women put their lives on the line to keep America strong, proud, and free. Through partnerships like Red Shirt Fridays, the North Texas community is reminded of the privilege and duty we bear to honor, thank, and give back.

To the TownSquareBuzz Foundation, City of McKinney, Community Lifeline Center, and every individual and business helping to paint McKinney red:

Thank you for your efforts. May God continue to bless the United States of America through great folks like you. I salute you!

JACK SILLIMAN

HON. RANDY HULTGREN

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2012

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today in honor of U.S. Marine, Jack Silliman. Tragically, Jack was killed during the Vietnam War. In 1961, when Jack was still a boy in the 7th grade he wrote a winning speech that was presented to President John F. Kennedy.

I submit Jack's speech.

WHAT I CAN DO FOR MY COUNTRY

Madam president, honorable judges, fellow C.Y.C.L. members, parents, teachers and