

LET'S WORK TOGETHER

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

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, it's been over 400 days since the Republicans took control of the House of Representatives and they still have not put forward a jobs agenda.

Instead of focusing on creating new jobs, Republicans have been working on a partisan agenda that would end Medicare as we know it, protect tax breaks for companies that send jobs overseas, and cut jobs, including 550,000 jobs that would be lost in the Republican transportation bill.

Now prices at the pump are on the rise across the Nation. American families are hurting. It's time for Republicans to stop political games and work with Democrats on all-of-the-above energy solutions that stop the speculators who are inflating oil prices, extend production tax credits to create over 37,000 new jobs in solar energy, and cut \$40 billion in tax breaks for oil over the next decade. Let's work together on a responsible energy plan to lower gas prices and create new jobs at home.

Before I close, I would just like to announce that I'm having a woman's health conference next month, March 15.

LOWERING GAS PRICES AND CREATING JOBS

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, here's the sign at a gas station at the corner of Pike Street and I-77 in Marietta, Ohio: \$3.69 for a gallon of unleaded regular. It's one example of surging gas prices across southeastern Ohio.

When President Obama took office, the price for a gallon of gas was \$1.86. It has now doubled, and some estimate that it will be around 5 bucks by this summer. This is just one indicator that President Obama's energy policies have failed America and are continuing to make our economy worse.

He says that he wants an all-of-the-above approach to energy, but his actions do the exact opposite. In fact, President Obama cut oil production on Federal lands by 11 percent last year and he blocked the Keystone XL pipeline.

We can't afford President Obama's destructive energy policies anymore. Not only will increased energy production lower the price at the gas pump, but it will create much-needed jobs right now. Hardworking Americans need both, not more of the same from President Obama.

□ 1210

KICKOFF OF WOMEN'S HEALTH WEDNESDAY

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

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to announce the inaugural Women's Health Wednesday. Starting today and continuing for every Wednesday, Members of this distinguished body will take to the floor to talk about mammograms, about comprehensive family planning, and, yes, even about birth control.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to kick off this first Women's Health Wednesday by reminding everybody this is 2012, not the dark ages. So it amazes me that the debate we've been having lately, both in the Halls of this Congress and out in the political scene, is about birth control. Birth control.

Ninety-nine percent of women have used birth control at some point in their lives, including 98 percent of Catholic women; and 1.5 million women in this country rely on birth control for noncontraceptive purposes to treat a variety of medical conditions. The Institute of Medicine has determined, based upon science, that birth control is a fundamental part of women's preventive care. Yet here we are, debating about birth control.

Mr. Speaker, over the next coming weeks, we will have many conversations, and I'm excited to talk about women's health.

PASTOR YUCEF

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, this evening the House will consider H. Res. 556, condemning Iran for their persecution, imprisonment, and sentencing to death of Christian Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani. Pastor Youcef has been in prison for 2½ years now under the charges of apostasy and condemned to death by hanging. His wife, too, was arrested and condemned to life in prison, but later released.

Christians and other religious minorities are under assault in Iran today. Hundreds have been imprisoned and many have been executed on trumped-up charges. In fact, while the official charges against Pastor Youcef are apostasy and evangelism, the state media said that he has been charged with rape and extortion.

The authorities in Iran know that they are violating both their own constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in their treatment of Pastor Youcef and other minorities.

This week, the House will call on Iran to respect these agreements and to release Pastor Youcef so that he, his wife, and children may practice their

religion freely and not according to the dictates of the state.

WOMEN'S HEALTH WEDNESDAY

(Ms. CHU asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. CHU. Mr. Speaker, today I'm thinking about the 99 percent of American women who have used birth control. Today, I'm thinking about the 98 percent of Catholic women who have used birth control.

Birth control is a necessity for many women, and it is unfair that women have to pay 68 percent more for it in out-of-pocket costs than men because it is not covered by all health insurance plans.

It is especially unfair to the women who use birth control pills to save their lives. In fact, these pills have prevented 200,000 ovarian cancers and 100,000 deaths.

The nurses, secretaries, and janitors who work at religiously affiliated hospitals and universities should not have to pay more for their health care costs and be punished because of where they work. That's not fair. The Obama administration's policy changes this and is fair. It's about time that women get a break for all that they do to raise children in this world.

TRIBUTE TO CHRIS PARR

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

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Christine Parr. Although Chris passed away earlier this month, her memory will live on with her family and friends.

For nearly 40 years, Chris was married to husband Al Parr. Together, they built a life and family in Harrisburg, Arkansas. Chris and Al have two children, Will and Angela. Chris joined Al in being active members of the Harrisburg Church of Christ where Al serves as pulpit minister.

Chris was a homemaker and a collector of souvenir spoons, bears, and Russian stacking dolls, among other things. Years ago she also operated a sewing business and day care from her home. She enjoyed anything to do with a needle and thread and over the years has made many clothes and quilts for her family and friends.

I will always remember Chris and the kindness that she showed my family and me. Chris had a passion for America. She loved people; and once she committed herself to a cause, she and Al devoted themselves completely and worked tirelessly.

My thoughts and prayers are with Chris's family. As a person of great faith, I know that Chris is now in Heaven with her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. While her presence here on Earth will be missed, her example will be a guide for her family and friends for years to come.

God bless Chris Parr, and God bless her family.

WOMEN'S HEALTH AND CONTRACEPTIVES

(Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the importance of ensuring coverage for contraceptives and the impact this has on women's health.

For centuries, important aspects of women's health care have been treated as a political football by advocates on all sides of the issue. In politicians' efforts to score political points, women suffer because of a lack of access to coverage, a lack of reliable information about health care choices, and because many women are vilified for some of the health care choices they make.

It's time to take politics out of women's health, and it's time to ensure that women's health coverage includes full access to contraception. Birth control can have significant health care benefits for women and their families. It can significantly reduce health care costs. And it's one of the most commonly taken drugs in the United States.

We need to stop playing games with people's health and instead live up to our responsibilities to protect the right of women to make the health care choices that are right for them. I look forward to working every Wednesday to talk about women's health.

FIFTH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL RARE DISEASE DAY

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

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, today, February 29, marks the fifth annual International Rare Disease Day, a day devoted to bringing attention to the needs of those with rare diseases.

There are nearly 7,000 rare diseases. Research opportunities remain difficult; and approved therapies are scarce, despite the fact that rare or orphan diseases afflict nearly one in 10 Americans. Bureaucratic hurdles and a lack of research incentives add to the challenges of those with rare or orphan diseases and the organizations that serve them.

As cochairman of the Rare Disease Caucus with my colleague, Congressman JOSEPH CROWLEY, I am committed to working in a bipartisan capacity with like-minded Members, policy advocates, and families across the Nation to increase awareness and education of rare diseases.

It is through greater awareness that we are able to bring hope to those who suffer from rare and orphan diseases.

GAS PRICES

(Mrs. DAVIS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I represent San Diego, California, which has the dishonor of being home to the highest gas prices in the Nation. The most expensive gas in San Diego was going for \$4.75 a gallon, and that hurts my constituents.

My friends on the other side of the aisle believe the solution is simple—more production means lower prices. However, our Nation's oil production is the highest it has been in years. And yet so are gas prices. The conclusion? More drilling does not mean lower prices.

Independent analysis has pointed to Wall Street speculators as a culprit for the rise in gas prices. Mr. Speaker, we've heard this story before: Wall Streeters gaming markets to make big bucks at the expense of consumers.

Another culprit? There is nothing truly competing against gasoline. Prices will go down when there are alternative fuels and real transportation choices to compete with oil.

There are two things that Congress can do to relieve the pain at the pump: an innovative 21st-century approach to our energy problems, and we need to tame the speculative markets.

JOB CREATION

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

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of commonsense policies that will help create jobs.

I had the pleasure of meeting with one of my constituents, Jon David of Evansville, Indiana. Jon owns a small business, David Enterprises, an asphalt contractor and concrete supplier. He would like to expand his business, but onerous regulations are preventing him from doing it.

When I sat down with Jon, he talked about how EPA rules—such as emissions controls, dust regulations, the permitting process for oil refining, and wetlands designations on his property—these regulations, he tells me, are keeping him from selling his product and services that would allow him to expand his business and hire more employees. Instead, he spends his time dealing with regulations that increase his costs and prevent him from expanding.

The EPA under this administration should take note of how rules and regulations are hurting job creation. This is unacceptable. The House has passed bills to help out Jon and others like him, but the Senate has ignored them. There are 27 bills, at least, that we've passed here that we've sent to the Senate that would help Jon so he could quit spending his days fighting regulations so his business can survive.

HONORING REACH OUT AND READ 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 Reach Out and Read Rhode Island, a program that works with doctors to encourage young patients and their families to read.

In honor of the upcoming Read Across America Day, I wish to recognize the contributions this program makes in my home State, where it reaches 35,000 infant-to-preschool-aged children each year in 44 locations. Reach Out and Read Rhode Island provides free books through pediatricians' offices for children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years old, creating a small library for children and emphasizing the importance of reading.

Reach Out and Read Rhode Island helps to distribute 60,000 books each year to young children and their families, working to build a foundation for when a child enters school. Reach Out and Read Rhode Island should take great pride in the contributions it makes to our young children. I congratulate Reach Out and Read Rhode Island on its success.

□ 1220

EXPAND DOMESTIC ENERGY PRODUCTION TO REDUCE GAS PRICES

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

Mr. HULTGREN. Mr. Speaker, last week, I heard from my constituents about the impact rising gas prices are having on their families and on their small businesses.

Congress must act to protect our constituents from even higher gas prices by expanding our Nation's domestic energy production. The solution is pretty simple—let's expand American energy production. This will reduce the cost of gas, putting money back in the wallets of every American, and it will create the kind of good-paying jobs that so many people need and would help get our economy moving again.

The House has already passed four bills to expand domestic energy production. It's time for the Senate to pass those bills and send them to President Obama so that he can show us whether his commitment to an all-of-the-above energy policy is mere rhetoric.

Creating jobs, saving our constituents money, and helping our economy should be bipartisan goals, and we can achieve them by expanding American energy production.

ASSAD'S ATROCITIES

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, first, I join with my female colleagues in supporting full health coverage for every single woman in our Nation.

I also rise to condemn the actions of Syria's Assad government, which are