

is very difficult to understand \$2.5 trillion. Well, \$2.5 trillion is \$79,000 per second. That's what we were spending on health care, \$79,000 per second. I'll be quite candid with you: these numbers are so huge that sometimes I do confuse them myself. That's \$79,000 per second.

We were spending 17.6 percent of GDP on health care. It was projected that by 2018, we would be spending \$4.4 trillion per year on health care. That would be \$139,000 per second. As I said, big numbers. It's hard to always get them correct because they are so huge and they can be confusing. That's \$139,000 per second.

We had 45,000 persons per year dying because they didn't have proper health care. We had 21 million people who were working full time and did not have insurance. That is 21 million people. In my State of Texas, 6 million people were uninsured. Twenty percent of the State's children were uninsured. In Harris County in my State of Texas, 1.1 million people were uninsured.

It was time for this Congress to act, and act we did. By passing the Affordable Care Act, we have reduced the cost of health care over the long term. It doesn't happen immediately, because the rising cost, as I've explained to you, was exponentially huge. It was almost unimaginable. To bring it down doesn't mean it comes down instantly, but over the next 20 years we will save a trillion dollars.

Here's what we've done. Aside from lowering the cost, which is important, we also impact lives. Preventive care is there. We also do away with pre-existing conditions. For those who did not know, pregnancy is a preexisting condition. We also make sure that women are not discriminated against. Women won't be charged more simply because they are females, because they are women. We equalize health care as it relates to the genders. We close the doughnut hole as it relates to senior citizens. I might also add that in '09, we were spending about \$100 billion a year on uninsured persons, much of that in emergency rooms where persons had to go to the emergency room to get the care that they did not have by virtue of not having insurance. They were getting their primary care in emergency rooms. They were also getting their pharmaceuticals through emergency rooms. It was a time to act, and act we did. We passed the Affordable Care Act.

I will close with this. We live in the richest country in the world. One out of every 100 persons is a millionaire. In this country, if you are an enemy combatant and we should capture you and wound you in the process, we will give you aid and comfort. In this country, if you are a bank robber and you're robbing the bank and on the way out we should harm you, when we capture you, we will give you aid and comfort. In this country, if you're on death row and scheduled to meet your Maker next week and you get sick this week, we

give you aid and comfort this week and we send you to meet your Maker next week. In this country, if we can give aid and comfort to the enemy combatant, if we can give aid and comfort to the criminal who robs the bank, if we can give aid and comfort to the person on death row, surely we can give aid and comfort to hardworking Americans who do not earn enough to afford insurance.

The Affordable Care Act does this. It does not require people who cannot afford insurance to buy it, but it does say that every person who can should buy insurance.

The Affordable Care Act is making a difference in the lives of people. Children can stay on their parents' policies until they're 26 years of age. This was a good piece of legislation. I supported it then and I still support it now. The Affordable Care Act is affordable, and that is why we passed it.

REAUTHORIZE THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support legislation that I, along with Congressman GEORGE MILLER of California and RUBÉN HINOJOSA of Texas, are introducing later today to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act.

The Workforce Investment Act, or WIA as it is commonly known, is the primary Federal law governing how employment and training services are provided to adults, youth, and dislocated workers. It was enacted in 1998 when unemployment was below 5 percent and before many of today's high growth industries even existed. It is long past time for WIA to be modernized and retooled to address our country's current challenges.

The bill I'm introducing today does just that. This bill increases access to training and improves the delivery of employment services. It strengthens the law's accountability standards to better evidence program effectiveness and provide assurances that our taxpayer dollars are being well spent.

My bill ensures that the kind of innovative work that's being done by the North Shore Workforce Investment Board in my district and elsewhere across the country can be replicated and taken to scale, and it expands the role of community colleges in job training.

□ 1040

This is the kind of commonsense legislation on which this Congress should be acting. We need to make sure we provide the training and education so that Americans have the skills to fulfill the jobs of today and tomorrow. Too many businesses have job vacancies because they can't find qualified candidates. Working together to help

workers and those looking to hire them should not be a partisan issue. We need to find those qualified candidates and put them to work.

Modernizing and strengthening WIA will help both workers and employers, and it will ensure that our country can remain competitive in this global economy. I urge my colleagues' support for it.

PROTECTING AMERICA'S YOUTH

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning on a number of issues that I think are enormously important, and I am delighted to join initially my colleague from Texas to again emphasize and truthfully tell the story about the Affordable Care Act that is now 2 years old. But as a founder and the cochair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, and because our children are our presents and our tomorrows, I think it's important to ask the question: Do we want healthy children? And should health care be a question of wealth and status? Or should it be open to all of our beautiful and precious children and youth?

The Affordable Care Act allows our young college students to remain on their parents' health insurance until the age of 26. The Affordable Care Act allows a baby that has a proclivity to asthma as a preexisting condition to be able to be covered by insurance. It provides an opportunity for extensive research into some of the unsolved childhood diseases, such as pediatric cancer. And, of course, it provides greater access to health care by expanding what we call community health clinics, something that I have been a proponent of since coming to Congress and throughout the Bush administration, when I asked President Bush directly about the number of community health clinics not only in the Nation but in my State of Texas, where we have the highest number of uninsured persons.

So I don't know why our Republican Presidential candidates and many think that the rising pathway to victory is to condemn an opportunity for our children. I find that curious, at best. And I would applaud and celebrate President Obama and his administration, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Secretary Sebelius, and all of those who are contributing to the implementing of this legislation. I can tell you, in Texas today, as I stand, women are being denied access to health care. Thank God for the Affordable Care Act for its constitutional or its Federal premise of providing access to health care for all Americans. At least we have something that we can use to question the denial of access to health care to women in the State of Texas.

I indicated that I chair the Congressional Children's Caucus, so I rise

today to applaud the Justice Department decision to investigate the death, the murder, of Mr. Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida. A youngster, the child of two loving parents, minding his own business, wearing the attire of youthful people, hoodies, sneakers. I understand that he had his earphones in his ear and may have been bopping along to a little music.

I support Neighborhood Watch. I come from local government. Neighbors should watch out for each other but not a neighborhood vigilante. If the 911 call said to that individual, Mr. Zimmerman, "Don't follow him," then get in your car and sit quiet. The police are on the way.

Every one of us, as parents—I have a son—this is not an issue that should strike us as color. It should be anyone that has a teenager, bopping along with a hoody on and sneakers and earphones in his ear, just going to get candy, to be able to sit in front of the all-star game, and he winds up with a gunshot to the chest that kills him dead in his tracks.

Thank you Justice Department for recognizing that the harsh law in the State of Florida that says that you can stand your ground and defend yourself, this man should have retreated. He should have never been out there after that boy. That boy was not found coming out of a window, going through a door. He was on a sidewalk. And it is an outrage. Thank you to President Obama's Justice Department for recognizing that his civil rights are now in question of having been violated. And the Federal law preempts Florida's law, which is the harshest law in this Nation. Every parent should think at least that if their child is just being a child, just being a teenager, a youngster who liked to babysit and play football, that he still had life ahead of him.

I also want to say that I support moving the "R" status from the bullying bill. I held a major hearing in my district. Bullying is an epidemic. And I have introduced major legislation, H.R. 83, and I am encouraging the Judiciary Committee to pass this legislation dealing with bullying. It is an epidemic. We can reauthorize the block grant to give money for best practices to help parents, to help schools, to help children learn about bullying. I believe in our children. I want this Congress to believe in our children, and this Nation to believe in our children.

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 10 o'clock and 44 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro

tempore (Mr. GINGREY of Georgia) at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Andrew Walton, Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church, Washington, D.C., offered the following prayer:

On a day when leaders of Irish and American nations meet to celebrate common heritage and mutual dreams, may our spirits be united in the one spirit.

May this day bring the memory of shared anguish and struggle to stir appreciation for times when comfort and peace are our companions.

May this day awaken within us wonder and imagination that inspire us beyond the confines of routine and ritual.

May the contemplations, conversations, and decisions of the day be undergirded by wise thoughts, kind words, and humane actions.

May we find God-given goodness within ourselves and within those whom we encounter that we may defend and nurture the worth and dignity of every human being.

May we find success on our journey.

Go n-eiri an bothar leat, meaning, "May the road rise with us."

May the wind be always at our back.

May the sun shine warm upon our face,

The rains fall soft upon our fields,

And until we meet again,

May God hold us in the hollow of His hand.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 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 pro tempore. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under clause 5 (d) of rule XX, the Chair announces to the House that, in light of the resignation of the gentleman from Washington (Mr. INSLEE), the whole number of the House is 432.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests

for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

CAPTAIN THOMAS "BILL" DILLION—HOUSTON FIRE FIGHTER

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as the bagpipes played in the background, the black cloth of sacrifice was draped over the badges of Houston first responders yesterday.

Senior Captain Thomas "Bill" Dillion of the Houston Fire Department was rushing into a house fire on March 14 when he apparently died of a heart attack. Captain Dillion was 49 years of age and had spent 23 years with the Houston Fire Department. He had three children.

With somber respect, hundreds of Texas firefighters, police officers, emergency medical technicians, and citizens attended his funeral. Mr. Speaker, 300 firefighters from other towns in Texas volunteered their time to fill in at Houston Fire Department stations so Houston firefighters could attend the funeral.

Firefighters are a family of dedicated, loyal public servants. Captain Dillion and other firefighters spend their lives rescuing people they do not know and protecting property they have never seen from fire. Most of us flee danger; firefighters rush to the smell of smoke and the heat of danger.

Bill's crew at Station 69 spoke yesterday about him, saying he was a devout Christian, had a contagious happy mood, loved to fish and, of course, liked country music.

Captain Dillion and his fellow firefighters are a remarkable breed, a rare breed, the American breed. We thank them, one and all.

And that's just the way it is.

AMERICAN WOMEN'S HEALTH

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

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, this week marks the second anniversary of the Affordable Care Act, legislation that makes quality health care more affordable for everyone. March is also Women's History Month, so I would like to talk about how this act affects women's health.

Instead of just imposing government mandates on health care for women, I believe the Affordable Care Act empowers women and their families because the Affordable Care Act bans insurance companies from requiring women to obtain authorization before getting OB/GYN care. The Affordable Care Act keeps insurance companies from denying coverage for conditions such as breast or cervical cancer, pregnancy, having had a C-section, or being the victim of domestic violence; and it ends the practice of gender rating, so women will no longer be charged higher rates for simply being a woman.