

MINNESOTA LEADS IN CHARTER SCHOOL MOVEMENT

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, my home State of Minnesota has a remarkable legacy when it comes to charter school education. By launching the first charter schools in the country, along with leading the way in public education and reform nationwide, we have been able to serve our students and community for the past 20 years in a better way.

In celebrating two decades now of achievement, let's ensure that this tradition continues by looking for further ways to improve these schools, making them effective for all American students. I was pleased, Mr. Speaker, that my amendment to the Empowering Parents Through Quality Charter Schools Act not only enhances teaching methods in schools, but also breaks down the barriers to make charter schools more accessible for the thousands of students that are now wait-listed across the country.

Young people should have the opportunity for a good education regardless of their ZIP code.

Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the recent anniversary for charter schools and encourage their support in the years to come.

□ 1610

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker the draft farm bill, unfortunately, contains serious damage to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the foundational food lifeline for millions of Americans. What a shame when unemployment levels remain too high, with the cost of living rising, with food prices going up that affect so many of our senior citizens, and millions of Americans who live at the edge. Surely this Congress can do better.

Wall Street speculators and bankers got to keep all their bonuses, and the Republican majority can't seem to find their way to ask the richest to pay something to help our Republic close the gap. Millionaires and billionaires, couldn't they forego some of their ill-gotten treasure, especially the speculators who led this Republic to the edge?

What do the Republicans do? Literally take food out of the mouths of children, seniors, the unemployed, the disabled—\$16 billion worth. Citizens who live at the edge of poverty receive \$1.50 per meal in benefits.

The farm bill thus far takes food off the table of up to 3 million Americans and asks nothing of millionaires and billionaires. What a shame.

I urge my colleagues to oppose the cuts to SNAP.

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose the deep cuts proposed to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

The SNAP program provides low-income families, our disableds, and our elderly essential access to healthy foods. We should not ask our most vulnerable citizens to go hungry to balance the Federal budget. A cut of \$16 billion in SNAP benefits will not achieve that balanced budget.

SNAP benefits not only provide needed nutritional support to recipients; they support local economies and our farm operations by boosting sales of fresh fruit and vegetables at farmers markets and local grocery stores. Our Nation's farmers and ranchers produce high-quality abundant foods in a system that is the envy of the world.

There is no reason for anyone to go hungry in the United States. Let's produce a food and farm bill that each day gives farmers a fair deal and ensures all of our citizens nutritious meals.

GAME CHANGER FOR FOOTBALL FANS

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

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, in my home town of Buffalo, New York, nearly half the Bills games were blacked out last season because, despite an average game attendance of 67,000, the games were not sellouts because Ralph Wilson Stadium is one of the largest in the league.

Last week, we learned that NFL owners passed a resolution allowing teams to decide to broadcast games locally when more than 85 percent of seats are filled. This is a change to current policy, which requires a stadium to be sold out.

If teams embrace this new policy, it will be a game changer for football fans in Buffalo and across the Nation. This change would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of loyal sports fans, including Sports Fans Coalition, the Buffalo Fan Alliance, and the Bills Mafia.

I urge the NFL owners to opt into this policy and the Federal Communications Commission to consider a similar policy change. Fans support their local stadiums with their tax dollars. It's time for teams to give back something in return for that commitment that they have made.

BLOCKING PROPERTY OF PERSONS THREATENING THE PEACE, SECURITY, OR STABILITY OF BURMA—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 112-123)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the "order") that modifies the scope of the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13047 of May 20, 1997, as modified in scope in Executive Order 13448 of October 18, 2007, and relied upon for additional steps taken in Executive Order 13310 of July 28, 2003, Executive Order 13448 of October 18, 2007, and Executive Order 13464 of April 30, 2008, and takes additional steps with respect to that national emergency.

In Executive Order 13047, the President found that the Government of Burma committed large-scale repression of the democratic opposition in Burma after September 30, 1996, and further determined that the actions and policies of the Government of Burma constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. To address that threat and to implement section 570 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Appropriations Act, 1997 (Public Law 104-208), the President in Executive Order 13047 prohibited new investment in Burma. On July 28, 2003, the President issued Executive Order 13310, which contained prohibitions implementing certain provisions of the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-61) and blocked the property and interests in property of persons listed in the Annex to Executive Order 13310 or determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to meet designation criteria specified in Executive Order 13310. In Executive Order 13448, the President expanded the scope of the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13047, incorporated existing designation criteria set forth in Executive Order 13310, blocked the property and interests in property of persons listed in the Annex to Executive Order 13448, and provided additional criteria for designations of other persons. In Executive Order 13464, the President blocked the property and interests in property of persons listed in the Annex to Executive Order 13464 and provided additional criteria for designations of other persons.

While the Government of Burma has made progress towards political reform in a number of areas, including by releasing hundreds of political prisoners, pursuing ceasefire talks with several

armed ethnic groups, and pursuing a substantive dialogue with the democratic opposition, this reform is fragile. I support this reform in Burma and the building of a democratic political process that will allow all of the people of Burma to be represented. However, I have found that the continued detention of political prisoners, efforts to undermine or obstruct the political reform process, efforts to undermine or obstruct the peace process with ethnic minorities, military trade with North Korea, and human rights abuses in Burma, particularly in ethnic areas, effectuated by persons within and outside the Government of Burma, constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. To address this situation, the order imposes additional measures with respect to Burma.

The order provides criteria for designations of persons determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with or at the recommendation of the Secretary of State:

To have engaged in acts that directly or indirectly threaten the peace, security, or stability of Burma, such as actions that have the purpose or effect of undermining or obstructing the political reform process or the peace process with ethnic minorities in Burma;

To be responsible for or complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, or to have participated in, the commission of human rights abuses in Burma;

To have, directly or indirectly, imported, exported, reexported, sold or supplied arms or related materiel from North Korea or the Government of North Korea to Burma or the Government of Burma;

To be a senior official of an entity that has engaged in the acts described above;

To have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, the acts described above or any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order; or

To be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury the authority, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order.

All agencies of the United States Government are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

BARACK OBAMA.
THE WHITE HOUSE, July 11, 2012.

□ 1620

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from New York (Mr. TONKO) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. TONKO. This evening we are going to address for the coming hour with a couple of our colleagues the issues of affordable health care and the fact that we see a pattern here that's established by the House that seems to walk away from the needs of a middle class, a working class in this society. Our country depends upon a thriving middle class, one that is given the respect and the dignity it so much deserves. And with the attacks on Social Security with its 76-year old history and the efforts to privatize Social Security, we understand that that would put at risk a number of people.

Not a single cent of Social Security was lost to its recipients during the very painful recession. And likewise, in the mid-sixties we saw the emergence of Medicare, which allowed for, again, the dignity factor to be presented and found in the midst of our senior households where, at that point in time, prior to Medicare, those who would retire would anticipate a decline in their income and their economic security simply because of the impact that their health care costs would have on their retirement years. Since then, not only have we seen a stronger sense of security and stability in those senior households, but we have seen a strengthening of the response to the health care needs of our seniors because of the stability that Medicare produced and the quality of the care that has been part and parcel to the Medicare history.

And so now, in its infancy, the Affordable Care Act is under threats with the repeal measure that was just taken on this House floor to undo the progress that was achieved for, again, America's health care consumers. It is a troubling notion, at best. This hour of discussion will be dedicated to the concerns that we have for the economic ripple effects that befall the middle class, which needs to be a thriving middle class, and the impact of several of these attacks that seem to undermine the very foundations upon which security is provided to America's great populations.

So we're concerned. We're concerned about that repeal and what it means, what is removed from the equation of success that was brought about a couple of years ago as we worked in a bipartisan, bicameral way with the White House to make certain that a growing need out there that found this country as the only industrialized nation to not have a universal health care program, when that is put at risk again because of the efforts to repeal.

We are joined by my colleague from California, Representative JOHN GARAMENDI.

JOHN, you witnessed this vote just now to repeal health care. The Affordable Care Act was providing hope and opportunity and promise to all generations in this American mosaic. It is a tragic moment.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. TONKO, thank you so very much. And thank you for beginning this discussion by going back into the history of the United States back to the development of Social Security and the extraordinary benefit that that has brought to not only seniors but to their children, to families, knowing that when retirement age approached—65—there would be a foundation for whatever retirement program a person would have, and also for pointing out that for years now, and certainly in the recent decade, our Republican colleagues have called for the privatization of Social Security.

Now if you trust Wall Street, then I guess it's a good idea. If we had any lesson, we should have had the lesson of 2008 and 2009, when Wall Street turned its back on the American public and simply ripped us off to a fare-thee-well and nearly collapsed the world economy. Were it not for the efforts of the Obama administration and, frankly, this Congress, it may very well have happened.

And then you pointed out Medicare coming along in 1964, 1965 and the way in which that has protected seniors. I remember as a young child—I think I was probably 7 or 8—my dad took me down to the county hospital to visit one of our neighbor ranchers. I've got to tell you it was horrible. That was the only care available for a senior who had no money. And then Medicare came along, and 60 percent of America's seniors were in poverty prior to Medicare. Now, with Social Security and Medicare, it's somewhere around 10, 15 percent. An enormous boost. Yet twice this House has voted to terminate Medicare. Not the Democrats. Our Republican colleagues twice have voted to terminate Medicare so that every American less than 55 years of age would not receive Medicare. They would be given a voucher and told to go fight as best they could in the private insurance market.

And then today, another major effort by the Democrats to provide health care for all Americans—a health insurance policy that you knew was there, that you could count on, that would be affordable. The 31st time, today, a full repeal or a partial repeal was taken up and passed by our Republican colleagues.

So what's an American to do? What does it mean to Americans? Let's spend some time talking about what this means to Americans if you didn't have Medicare. If you don't have the Affordable Care Act, what would it mean?

I'm going to start, if I might, or would you like to start?

Mr. TONKO. Absolutely. We, I know, are joined by some of our colleagues. But if you want to go through your chart.