

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, DC, November 13, 2013.

Hon. FRED UPTON,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN UPTON: I am writing concerning H.R. 3350, the "Keep Your Health Plan Act of 2013," which may be scheduled for floor consideration this week.

As you know, the Committee on Ways and Means has jurisdiction over the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. Section 5000A of the Internal Revenue Code requires individuals to maintain minimum essential coverage or pay a penalty. Section 2(b) of H.R. 3350 modifies which health care plans would meet the requirement of minimum essential coverage. However, in order to expedite this legislation for floor consideration, the Committee will forgo action on this bill. This is being done with the understanding that it does not in any way prejudice the Committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or its jurisdictional prerogatives on this or similar legislation.

I would appreciate your response to this letter, confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 3350, and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration.

Sincerely,

DAVE CAMP,
Chairman.

OPENING OF THE GOV. GEORGE DEUKMEJIAN COURTHOUSE

HON. ALAN S. LOWENTHAL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2013

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, the recent opening of the \$340-million Gov. George Deukmejian Courthouse in Long Beach is the culmination of nearly a decade of work. Part of the Los Angeles County Superior Court System, the new 531,000-square-foot glass-and-concrete structure replaces the current 55-year-old Long Beach courthouse that is the most outdated in the state and has been deemed seismically unfit.

The new Deukmejian Courthouse is 65 percent larger than the old courthouse, with 24 courtrooms and room to expand to 30. It is equipped with wireless Internet access throughout and space for five retail vendors to service the courthouse traffic.

For me, the road to the new Courthouse began nearly a decade ago in conversations between Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe, Long Beach Mayors Beverly O'Neill and Bob Foster, myself and the then-presiding judge of the Long Beach courthouse, Brad Andrews. Judge Andrew's vision of a new courthouse for Long Beach was the driving force behind the building of a coalition of supporters for the project. This coalition would eventually grow to include a vast number of supporters including members of the public, the private sector and government. I am proud to count myself among the early members of this group.

Those early discussions about a new courthouse revolved around the understanding that under the existing state funding and procurement system, it would be 15–20 years before a new Long Beach courthouse could be built.

As this core group grew, it became clear that a public private partnership would be nec-

essary to fund the project as the state could not expend the hundreds of millions of dollars needed to build the courthouse.

With support primarily from Assemblymember Hector De La Torre, and California State Senators Joe Dunn, Dick Ackerman and Don Perata, I introduced in the California State Budget Act of 2007, Senate Bill 77 which granted the authority for the Judicial Council and Administrative Office of the Courts to investigate the use of a public-private partnership in the development of the Long Beach project.

The Long Beach courthouse is the first to be built as a public-private funding partnership, with the developer, Long Beach Judicial Partners, paying for the upfront construction costs.

The new building is an example of what can be accomplished when the state, county and local governments work together to accomplish something that the whole community can be proud of. Our new courthouse is beautiful. It will act as a magnet for further development in the area for years to come while serving as a shining example of cooperation and innovation.

GUO FEIXIONG AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2013

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, last month I held a hearing that discussed China's detention of writer, activist, and self-trained legal advocate Guo Feixiong. A veteran of China's "rights defense" movement, Guo was criminally detained on August 8, 2013. We now know that he wasn't formally arrested until early September 2013. Guo's detention appears to be reprisal for his support of government transparency and calls for accountability. In recent months, Beijing has cracked down harshly on dozens of similar-minded advocates seeking political reforms.

Guo is not a newcomer to public advocacy or punishments. A former novelist and businessman, he first became widely known in 2005 for organizing protests of land seizures on the outskirts of Guangzhou city. In 2007, a Chinese court sentenced the outspoken Guo to five years' imprisonment on charges of illegal publishing. He and his supporters maintain the charges were fabricated to silence him and others. In late 2011, he was released. Since that time, he's continued to participate in China's "rights defense" movement. He's continued to express himself freely in the hopes of advancing human rights. He has protested along reporters fighting the Southern Weekly's heavy-handed-censorship and vocally supported recent calls for greater government transparency and an end to corruption.

Now, Guo is being held on charges of "assembling a crowd to disrupt order in a public place." This alleged crime—along with many others—is all-too-often used unjustly against the courageous men and women who want accountability or change. For simply asking for transparency, he is suspected of disrupting the harsh "order" Beijing enforces.

Notwithstanding China's own criminal procedural rules, authorities have denied Guo ac-

cess to a lawyer and have failed to properly notify his family. Once again, China continues to enforce its legal protections haphazardly when punishing or silencing those who advocate for change.

The hearing focused on the heroism and sacrifices of Mr. Guo. Sadly, Guo is one among many. In recent months, Chinese authorities have cracked down on dozens of human rights advocates participating in a so-called "New Citizens' Movement." The movement, which began forming last year, has been described as a loose network of like-minded, academics and lawyers who hold informal gatherings and promote various issues, including transparency and anti-corruption efforts.

These detentions signify Chinese citizens' growing resolve and Beijing's growing fears. Guo, and many others throughout China, want change. They want accountability, they want transparency, and they want justice. And, increasingly, they are willing to endure great risks and willing to sacrifice their own personal security to speak freely.

We were fortunate to be joined by Ms. Zhang Qing, Guo's courageous wife, and Ms. Yang Tianjiao, his wonderful daughter. We were also blessed to have with us two giants in the human rights field—Pastor Bob Fu and Mr. Chen Guangcheng who addressed the persecution of Guo and others and who also discussed more broadly the recent developments relating to freedom of expression in China.

With this current crackdown on Chinese human rights activists, it is important to understand the brave and bold people challenging the Chinese state. Inspiring figures like Guo put another heroic face on these detentions. This face, however, does more than just contextualize the current crackdown or add details to a prisoner file. It causes us to wonder about ourselves, our commitment to human rights, and the risks we are willing to take for those around us. Guo now faces an uncertain punishment, as we must determine our own human rights commitment to him and others.

In July 2013, Guo wrote about a 1989 Tiananmen activist now also facing the possibility of more prison time. He wrote, "[Zhao Changqing] is an important symbol of the 1989 generation, who, in the face of danger, takes action, bears responsibility, persists, pushes forward, and becomes more evolved. This is how one should behave and shoulder his fate!"

Despite the hardships and the odds, Guo reminds us that we must shoulder our responsibilities and our burdens. We are here today to accept our responsibility to Guo and these courageous Chinese human rights advocates. We hope that we can also "take action, bear responsibility, persist, push forward, and evolve" like these heroes. He reminds us that this is how we all should behave.

We hope that the Chinese Government is listening. We hope the Chinese citizens seeking change are listening. And, we hope Guo is listening. And we hope President Obama and our administration are listening and will do everything in their power to help free Guo and others fighting for human rights in China—so far that has not been the case.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2013

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I wish to correct a vote I made on Wednesday, October 30, on H.R. 992, the Swaps Regulatory Improvement Act. I mistakenly voted for this legislation, when I intended to vote against it. I have a longstanding record of supporting robust banking regulations that protect taxpayers from risky trading activity. Significantly altering provisions of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act before those reforms have been fully implemented is premature. I wish to clearly state for the record that I did not intend to vote for this legislation, and I look forward to continuing working for strong banking protections for the American people.

CONGRATULATING PACIFICA INSURANCE UNDERWRITERS ON ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN

OF NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2013

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Speaker, forty years ago, Jose Camacho Tenorio, a visionary businessman of the Northern Mariana Islands, saw the need and the opportunity for a locally-owned insurance agency in our island community. In response, he founded Pacifica Insurance Underwriters.

1973 was an exciting time in our islands. The Covenant to Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America was in the midst of being negotiated. Commercial hotels were beginning to rise. Japanese tourists and investors were just starting to appear on our shores.

Yet we were still very much in our economic infancy. Insurance coverage of any sort was difficult to obtain. Many individuals and many developing businesses did not even appreciate the value of insurance. Under these circumstances, I took great commitment and some courage to make the financial investment necessary to form Pacifica Insurance Underwriters.

The late Mr. Tenorio, affectionately known as "Joeten," took up the challenge, and working with the family of a business associate, Pete Ada, Jr. of Guam, and with the Tokugoro Kuribayashi family of Japan, established Pacifica Insurance Underwriters and installed Joseph Screen, a former official of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, as the company's first corporate executive.

Pacifica then teamed up with Tokio Marine & Nichido Fire Insurance Co., Ltd., a formidable Japanese insurer, and, as that company's general agent in the Northern Mariana Islands, began offering property and casualty, liability, and automobile insurance to businesses and individuals.

Over the years, Pacifica's business has grown: adding marine and workmen's compensation insurance, medical, dental, and vi-

sion plans, as well as term and whole life policies. Along the way, Pacifica entered into other general agency agreements with respected regional insurance companies Pacific Guardian Life and Century Insurance.

Throughout these four decades, Pacifica has lived up to the great responsibility of every insurer: Whether addressing a health issue, repairing a car, or recovering from natural or manmade disaster, when the need arises, they have been there for their customers.

In addition to writing thousands of policies annually across all lines of insurance, Pacifica has honored the legacy of its founders by becoming a valued corporate partner in our community. Still owned by its founding families and still run by Joeten's descendants, the company donates directly to schools, environmental groups, religious organizations, and other good causes. Pacifica makes substantial charitable donations through the Joeten Charitable Foundation. And its owners and employees individually lend their hands to a wide variety of community projects and events.

The Northern Mariana Islands has seen its share of economic highs and lows. In recent years, particularly, the insurance market has become more challenging, with increased competition, a decline in population, and a decreasing number of businesses. Through it all, Pacifica has remained consistent in its commitment to its employees, its customers, and our community.

We all feel proud when we witness a home-grown company with humble beginnings do well. So, please, join me in congratulating the owners and employees of Pacifica Insurance Underwriters on their fortieth anniversary, and in wishing them another forty years of success and growth.

SUPPORT FOR PASSAGE ON H. RES. 402

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 18, 2013

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I join my fellow Co-Chairs of the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus, Representatives MARCY KAPTUR and JIM GERLACH in rising today to support the passage of H. Res. 402, supporting the European aspirations of the people of the European Union's (EU) Eastern Partnership countries, and to express continued support for Ukraine as it moves closer to signing the EU Association Agreement.

In order for Ukraine to progress democratically and economically, it is imperative that the conditions of this agreement, as jointly initiated by the EU and Ukraine, are fully met—in law and in practice.

The critical November 28–29 Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania is quickly approaching, bringing with it the deadline for signing the Association Agreement. Accordingly, we urge the U.S. Department of State to advance all appropriate opportunities for cooperation with Ukraine to address the remaining required reforms, including electoral and rule of law reforms as well as issues related to selective justice, particularly the release of former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko. Along with the clear democratic and economic benefits, we believe these reforms, coupled

with international monitoring and oversight, provide the best opportunity to ensure free and fair elections in Ukraine in 2015 and beyond.

Consistent with our support for H. Res. 402, we applaud the EU's progress—much of it through the Eastern Partnership program—in helping to build democratic, prosperous, and stable societies throughout Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. Building on that progress is in the national interest of the United States; consequently, we call on the U.S. Department of State to direct needed resources to help support Ukraine's European choice.

KEEP YOUR HEALTH PLAN ACT OF 2013

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 15, 2013

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 3350, the so-called "Keep Your Health Plan Act of 2013." This bill is not a fix to the problems that have arisen because insurance companies are canceling plans that are insufficient to qualify under the new Affordable Care Act standards or are not viewed as economically viable and worth offering.

Instead, this bill will raise premiums in insurance marketplaces and undermine the overall market reforms that Obamacare is designed to remedy. Yesterday, President Obama offered a better solution than this bill, to address these issues.

As one of the few members that were here during the creation of Medicare, I remember first-hand the tactics used by those opposed to its creation. While this is a very different time and context in history, the vehemence of the opposition has its parallels.

Let me remind you that Medicare was once described by George H.W. Bush as "socialized medicine" and Ronald Reagan once stated that, "one of these days you and I are going to spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it once was like in America when men were free."

Today, Republicans have done little but resist and fear-monger in opposition to Obamacare's implementation. These conservatives see H.R. 3350 as "a metaphorical bullet to the gut of Obamacare." James Capretta, a conservative health care policy expert at the Heritage Foundation and American Enterprise Institute, described it as having an "end result that would be one more step toward fully reversing" what he describes as the "catastrophic mistake of Obamacare." And even Leader JOHN BOEHNER has argued that it is part of a larger strategy to "stop this law."

Although, Medicare has issues that need to be addressed, it has dramatically improved access to health care for America's seniors, leading to longer and healthier lives, reducing poverty, desegregating southern hospitals, and becoming one of the most popular government programs. From my own political experience, I can safely say that once in place and allowed to operate as designed, Obamacare will have a similarly positive affect.

Allowing H.R. 3350 to pass would be a step backward in the advances we have made in