

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 107

Mr. JONES. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I might remove my name from H.R. 107 as a cosponsor.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BACHMANN). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO BRITISH-AMERICAN INTER- PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2761, and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, of the following Member on the part of the House to the British-American Interparliamentary Group:

Mr. CICILLINE, Rhode Island

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE COMMISSION ON THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 6913 and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, of the following Members on the part of the House to the Congressional-Executive Commission on the People's Republic of China:

Mr. WOLF, Virginia

Mr. PITTINGER, North Carolina

Mr. MEADOWS, North Carolina

HONORING CIPRIANO GARZA

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Cipriano Garza, who this Saturday will be joining the ranks of the select few members in the South Dade High School's Alumni Hall of Fame.

Throughout his life, Cip—as he is known—has achieved high levels of personal success and excelled in his profession, making him a great example of the diversity and ingenuity of the south Florida community.

During his senior year at South Dade High, Cip set new State and school records for the 100-yard dash at the State Championships while crossing the finish line barefoot.

As a son of migrant farm workers, Cip has used his unique perspective in working with Dade County Public Schools to create innovative educational programs and eradicate the school dropout rate among children of migrant farm workers.

In 1993, after being appointed a special assistant to the Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Cip became the first Mexican-American to receive a Presidential appointment in the State of Florida.

Cip's many accomplishments and dedication to the betterment of the community make him deserving of this great honor.

Congratulations to Cip Garza.

ACA REPEAL

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

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, today, for the 37th time, the Republicans set a vote to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Yet again, this is a waste of time and taxpayer resources on pure political posturing, rather than working hard on behalf of hardworking American taxpayers.

As a freshman Member, I can tell you where I stand, and that is in 100 percent pure full support of the Affordable Care Act.

Republicans have ignored real problems affecting our country and instead have chosen to attack the poor and most vulnerable. Millions of Americans are already enjoying protections and benefits under the law. In my State of Texas, over 300,000 young adults are able to stay under their parents' plan. Over 3 million women and 1.8 million senior citizens have access to preventive care. Many more will have insurance coverage once the insurance exchanges are in place for 2014.

Republicans constantly talk about requiring more efficiency and reducing redundancy in Federal Government. How about we start reducing redundancy right here in Congress? Let's move beyond messaging bills and into actual substantive legislation. Let's focus on jobs and grow the economy rather than wasting money on repealing the Affordable Care Act.

SO-CALLED AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, Americans want and need greater access to health care, and they deserve reforms that will lower costs and expand access, but without undermining quality and innovation.

These were the promises of the President's health care reform law. They were worthy goals. Unfortunately, they are not reality.

To the contrary, over the past 3 years, families and businesses have seen a 400 percent premium increase for health care. Patients are being denied coverage that physicians will not accept. Employers have slowed hiring under new costs and the fear of what is ahead.

This Congress has rescinded funding for or completely repealed eight separate provisions of ObamaCare. Key provisions of the act are beginning to collapse under the weight of their own irreparable flaws. And even my Demo-

cratic colleagues have warned of the law's looming "train wreck."

Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve better. Full repeal of this flawed policy is the first step to enacting commonsense reforms to actually lower costs and expand access. Only then can we enact a law that can be truly called the "Affordable Care Act."

AUTOMATIC IRA ACT OF 2013

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

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about legislation that I have reintroduced—the Automatic IRA Act of 2013.

According to Boston College's Center for Retirement Research, the United States has a retirement income deficit of \$6.6 trillion.

One area I think we need to focus on is getting more low and middle-income workers into retirement savings.

It is estimated that 75 million workers—or half of American workers—have no employer-provided retirement plan or other opportunity to save for workplace contributions. The auto IRA is a commonsense solution to dramatically expand retirement savings in the United States.

Listen to this: this auto IRA proposal was jointly developed by myself, along with the Brookings Institution and the Heritage Foundation. It has garnered widespread support, including from AARP, the U.S. Black Chamber of Commerce, the Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement, and the Aspen Institute Initiative on Financial Security.

This is a commonsense piece of legislation that should be joined by both parties in advancing retirement opportunities for the American people.

PROMOTING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE STATE OF ISRAEL

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

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to encourage my colleagues to cosponsor legislation I have introduced to ensure that the State of Israel maintains its qualitative military edge.

Israel recently celebrated its 65th anniversary of independence.

Unfortunately, many of Israel's neighbors continue their relentless attacks against this Nation. While Iran pursues its nuclear program, it has launched cyber attacks against Israel.

Israel is under constant danger from both conventional and unconventional weapons. However, the current statutory definition of "qualitative military edge" does not include the threats posed by militia activity or cyber attacks.

These are very real threats against Israel and must be taken into account.

H.R. 1992 updates the definition of "qualitative military edge" so that the asymmetric and cyber warfare are considered and would require a 2-year reporting process.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Foreign Affairs Committee to advance this legislation and to increase our special relationship with Israel. I appreciate the chairman of Foreign Affairs, Mr. ROYCE, for his support and cosponsorship.

And I also would like to thank my friend from across the aisle, Mr. SCHNEIDER, for his support. Good policy knows no party line, and I look forward to working together to move forward this legislation.

REGARDING THE PATIENTS' RIGHTS REPEAL ACT

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

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I wanted a moment to reflect. This was a very sad day for me. Having been here during the emotional time during the debate on the Affordable Care Act, remembering the long hours and the deliberation in the committees in regular order, the opportunity for Republicans to offer amendments, and then today for the 37th time this particular act has now hurt millions of Americans.

My State is number one. Today, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to call the roll and ask those citizens of those States to call their Senators. For how can you vote for such a repeal of the Patients' Rights Act when Texas, Louisiana, Nevada, California, Florida, Georgia, Arkansas, Alaska, Mississippi, and Oklahoma all have uninsured over 20 percent, with Texas being 28.4 percent?

It is poverty that drives the need to expand Medicaid to my State, to my Governor. It is poverty that drives this. Whether you are poor, whether you are low-income, whether you are working middle class, the Affordable Care Act is to lift your boat to give you the opportunity to have preventive health care to be able to have access to doctors. Why would anybody vote to repeal the Patients' Rights Act?

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RESCUING AMERICANS FROM THE TRACKS OF HEALTH CARE DESTRUCTION

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

Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia. Ladies and gentlemen, let me tell you why people would vote to repeal the Affordable Care Act. It has become very, very clear that no matter how well-intentioned it may have been, it will not work. Time after time, we are finding that the things that they told us just aren't panning out to be true; and Senator MAX BAUCUS, one of the law's

main architects, recently described ObamaCare as a huge train wreck coming down.

We have a chance to save Americans from being casualties of the train wreck. We can yank them off the tracks. Today, I voted to show that I am trying to do just that.

I call on the United States Senate and the Senators to join us in rescuing the American people from the tracks of health care destruction.

SCANDALS IN WASHINGTON

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MEADOWS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. FORTENBERRY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In the past few weeks, it seems as if you can't turn on the news without hearing of another drama, of another crisis in Washington undermining confidence in our government, whether it's Benghazi, the IRS, the Department of Justice, or the Department of Health and Human Services. It's hard to know what may be next.

Mr. Speaker, there is an age-old expression that goes like this: be careful to whom you give a gun and a badge.

Authority is a very delicate matter. A well-functioning government must ensure that those who are in positions of influence are committed to serving the public with impartiality and fairness. Recent revelations have done much to undermine the public trust.

Mr. Speaker, 8 months ago, our Ambassador to Libya was killed along with three other Americans. Not only is this an affront to America because we lost our Ambassador; it is also an attack on our Nation, and it undermines the international rule of law. The process by which we have tried to unpack the details of this attack has been careening all over the place. Even after several committee hearings on Benghazi, including a Foreign Affairs Committee hearing in which I participated last December, a core question remains unanswered:

Who said "stand down" when reinforcements were called for?

Now, there may be legitimate military and diplomatic reasoning here, but we simply need to know the answer to that question; or this could have been a very serious mistake with the gravest of consequences.

In the past week, we've learned of discrimination against specific groups by the Internal Revenue Service. These reports are causing a firestorm across our country. Our sensitivities are rightly heightened when it comes to the collection of taxes. No one wants to pay taxes, but we must have a revenue-collecting agency in order to have a functioning Federal Government. It is unconscionable, though, that this agency targeted citizens because of their political or religious beliefs.

The IRS, of all agencies, must be held to the highest of high standards of fairness and impartiality. The reported actions seriously undermine the foundation of trust necessary between citizens and their government. That's why, this week, the Taxpayer Non-discrimination and Protection Act was introduced with my support. The legislation puts meaningful penalties in place when this foundation of trust is violated, penalties that could include prison time.

Perhaps it's also time for the IRS to implement a new policy. Everyone they are auditing, or perhaps have audited in the past 3 years, must be provided with a fuller explanation as to why they're going through this process so as to ensure that there is no improper targeting of American citizens based upon their religious or political beliefs. Just this morning, a friend of mine texted me, and another one called me just yesterday, worried that the audits that were undertaken against them were due to their own political leanings and engagements.

Mr. Speaker, the real issue is this: Just how deep and wide is the mind-set that pervaded the IRS that did target Americans based upon their religious or political leanings?

On another issue, we are learning that the Department of Justice seized phone records of Associated Press reporters, including records of their personal phone lines. Now, the ability to wiretap and probe needs to be in place in narrow circumstances, but the wide-ranging nature of what happened raises a number of questions, questions that beg us to ask: How do we protect the freedom of the press?

Another problem that hasn't been widely discussed is that the Department of Health and Human Services, in effect, is also targeting people based upon their beliefs. The Department is forcing Americans to pay for drugs and procedures that many find to be inconsistent with their deeply held, reasonable beliefs or their religious traditions. When the President introduced his health care plan, he told Americans that if they liked their health insurance, they could keep it. Now we are finding in some cases that you cannot keep your doctor, that you cannot keep your own health care plan, and now you may not even be able to keep your own faith tradition. This is a form of coercion that sets up a false choice and is un-American.

All of these events are converging to erode confidence in Washington. Now, thankfully, many of these concerns actually cross the political aisle. There is bipartisan concern. These are American issues, and these events underscore why we actually do have a balance of power in Washington. There is an executive branch that enforces the law, and there is a legislative branch that writes the law. The legislative branch also has the duty to provide oversight over the executive branch, which is a duty that Congress now is rightly embracing.