

low-income individuals and families, the elderly, the disabled—all of whom need these programs to survive.

Our focus in our communities should be to do everything possible to prevent homelessness.

KEEP THE IRS OFF YOUR HEALTH CARE ACT

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

Mr. DAINES. Madam Speaker, like most Montanans, I was appalled to learn that the IRS had deliberately targeted groups for investigation based on their beliefs. Given these events, it would be senseless to empower the IRS to oversee major aspects of the American health care system. Yet that's what ObamaCare calls for.

That's why I've signed on to the Keep the IRS Off Your Health Care Act, which states that the IRS may not be involved in any aspect of President Obama's health care law. In fact, just last night, I held a tele-town hall meeting with thousands of my fellow Montanans, and more than 90 percent of those who participated agreed that the IRS should be stripped of its power to implement ObamaCare.

The American people have every right to demand that their government be accountable and that their government's actions be driven by a desire to serve the American people, not by political motivation. With the IRS' recent abuse of power, it's sadly clear that stopping the IRS from using its power to oversee Americans' health care is a necessary step.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT IRVINE VOLLEYBALL

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

Mr. BERA of California. Madam Speaker, I'd like to congratulate the 2013 NCAA men's volleyball championship team from my alma mater, the University of California, Irvine. The UC system is one of the best public college systems in the world, and UC Irvine, through its academics, its research and athletics, continues to make me proud.

The volleyball team recently won its fourth championship in 7 years. It's amazing. Congratulations especially goes to Connor Hughes, the tournament's Most Outstanding Player. He joined Chris Austin, Michael Brinkley, Collin Mehring, and Kevin Tillie on the all-tournament team. Hats off to Coach David Kniffin, who is just the second coach in the 44 years of men's volleyball history to coach a team to the championship in his first season.

You've made us all proud. Go Ant-eaters.

ENERGY II

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. My constituents are asking me this question: What does this administration have against expanding energy production?

More American energy means more American jobs. We all know that that is true. It also would mean lower energy costs, stronger national security, and a boost to our economy, a boost that we badly need with 12 million Americans out of work. Yet the President has seemed to stymie the energy sector at every single turn. We're going to give him the opportunity to change that record as we bring another bill forward that would approve moving forward with the northern route of the Keystone pipeline.

Now, we all know that burdensome overregulation by this administration has caused energy output domestically on our Federal lands to decrease significantly—about 30 percent. It hampers our ability to be productive.

□ 1220

DISASTER RELIEF

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

Ms. CHU. This week, we saw heart-breaking images of devastation following a tornado in Moore, Oklahoma, that is estimated to have been more than a mile wide.

The scope of the disaster reminds us that we're all at the mercy of nature's whims, but it also reinforces a sense of community that we share as Americans. When the final cloud dissipated, Oklahomans were met by friends, neighbors, and Red Cross aid workers ready to help, the same as the victims of Sandy along the Jersey shore and the same as those who weathered the waters of Katrina in the Ninth Ward.

One thing every American can rely on in the face of disaster is that every other American wants to help. Whether we face tornadoes on the Great Plains or earthquakes in Los Angeles, we face them together. Let's make sure these victims get the Federal disaster aid they need on a timely basis. Whether we endure in a red State or a blue State, we are all equally deserving of each other's assistance.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, parents know all too well the sinking feeling that settles in around the kitchen table when it's time to pay bills.

Utilities costs takes up more and more each month and the once-simple task of putting gas in the car has become an act of financial acrobatics.

Heading into a long, hot summer, House Republicans are committed to an all-of-the-above American energy

strategy. If there's more American energy, prices will be more affordable, and there will be more American jobs. Period.

Who would stand in the way of that? Apparently, President Obama.

The President continues to play favorites in the energy sector and block domestic energy with onerous regulations. Red tape only makes it harder to capitalize on economic-growth opportunities and harder to achieve energy independence.

If the President were just to sign off on the Keystone XL pipeline today, he'd open up thousands of American jobs, but for 5 years he has refused.

House Republicans are serious about expanding energy production. It's time the President got serious, too.

JOHN LAIRD, THE HARVEY MILK CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE AWARD RECIPIENT

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

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and congratulate John Laird, a constituent of mine in Santa Cruz, California.

Today, John is being hosted at the White House as one of the 10 persons to be presented the Harvey Milk Champions of Change award.

John Laird is a committed public servant, counting 23 years in elective office and 40 years in public life overall.

He also happens to be gay. John's years of leadership prove that people are people and they have myriad skills to share. Sexual orientation doesn't somehow change that desire to serve others.

Currently, John serves as the California Secretary of Natural Resources where he does an outstanding job of overseeing the State's vast outdoor resources.

Again, I say congratulations to Secretary John Laird for being true to himself and true to his public calling and all of us in the State of California being the ones who benefit from it.

KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

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

Mr. MARINO. Madam Speaker, today I rise in support of the Keystone XL pipeline and urge passage of H.R. 3, the Northern Route Approval Act.

In the 1,700 days that TransCanada has been waiting for approval for Keystone XL, the State Department has issued over 15,000 pages of documents analyzing the project's environmental impact. This administration continues to delay and impede efforts to foster oil and natural gas production under an all-of-the-above energy solution.

Recent advances in technology have put America in the center of a booming

natural gas industry, particularly in my area, the PA 10th District. A NATO Parliamentary Assembly report estimates that our shale will provide gas to supply the United States for the next 90 years at least.

If Americans have access to vast and affordable resources, why are we not utilizing them? The same NATO PA report emphasized that the U.S. could lead the world in oil and natural gas production.

It's time to build. Remove the roadblocks preventing construction of the job-creating, economy-boosting Keystone XL pipeline.

THE TUCKERS ON SEQUESTER CUTS

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, as the reckless across-the-board cuts in Federal spending known as "sequester" continue, I want to share a letter I received from my constituents, Leslie and Brian Tucker:

After being robbed by our home lender during the mortgage modification fiasco, my wife took a job with Jefferson County Public Schools and turned it into a career. She earned a certificate in childhood development and went to work at Duvalle Learning Center in Early Childhood Education as an assistant. After hard work, she rose to a lead teacher position.

I am a union steel worker with bad insurance. We have three children together—the youngest is 13 months, the oldest is 16 years old. My wife recently was diagnosed with hyperthyroidism and will require an expensive procedure to fix it.

The news of her sequester-caused layoff hit us especially hard, as it seems every time we get ahead a step, something knocks us back down.

Middle class life now requires two incomes. Without my wife's job, we will undoubtedly end up drawing some sort of assistance. If Congress can fix travel delays with the stroke of a pen, then helping my wife and the other teachers in Louisville being laid off should be a walk in the park.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to listen to the Tuckers and end sequestration.

SISTER MONSON

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

Mr. STEWART. Madam Speaker, like all Americans, my thoughts and prayers are extended to the people of Oklahoma this day.

I also rise to pay tribute to a modern-day heroine, Mrs. Frances J. Monson, who passed away last week. Frances, the wife of Thomas S. Monson, president of the Church Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, led a life full of service, love, and dedication to her family, friends, and her faith.

Her daughter Ann has remarked of Mrs. Monson:

Instead of looking for the recognition of the world, she has always received her rec-

ognition of worth from such things as the happy smile of a son or the outstretched hand of a grandchild.

In 1998, she was the recipient of the Continuum of Caring Humanitarian award by the Friends of St. Joseph Villa, but she never asked for a lot of attention. Instead, she turned to serve others with a compassionate and caring attitude. Her life was a shining example of one filled with faith, hope, and charity.

On a very personal note, President and Mrs. Monson have always been a source of inspiration to me and my family. I want to thank them for their great example of Godly love, which has served as a model for more than 14 million Mormons around the world. She will be greatly missed; but her devotion to her faith has touched so many, it will undoubtedly leave a lasting impression upon the world.

PAY AS YOU RATE ACT

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

Ms. TITUS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to encourage my colleagues to join me as original cosponsors of the Pay As You Rate Act.

The Veterans Administration currently has more than 1 million backlog cases, and 70 percent of these have been under review for more than 125 days. For some veterans like those in southern Nevada, the average time to process a claim is close to 500 days. This is just unacceptable.

The Pay As You Rate Act will ensure that veterans receive at least some of their benefits in a more timely fashion.

Currently, the VA withholds benefit payments to veterans until their entire claim has been reviewed and processed. This is a serious problem, especially for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans whose average claim contains 8.5 separate components.

The Pay As You Rate Act will require the VA to pay veterans benefits as each element of the claim is reviewed rather than waiting until the entire package has been processed. This is a commonsense change which will put money in veterans' pockets sooner and also address the backlog.

□ 1230

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

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

Mr. MESSER. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of National Foster Care Month. All children deserve a safe, loving, and permanent home. Yet more than 400,000 of this Nation's children in foster care are still looking for such a place, a place where safe, supportive, and stable families can help nurture their dreams to reality.

Madam Speaker, our Nation can never forget these amazing young peo-

ple, and we should all thank the thousands of caregivers already answering the call and working tirelessly to help these children in need. But together, we must pledge to do more. Despite the best efforts of thousands, many foster youth struggle to find a permanent home. We are a Nation good enough and great enough to answer this call.

WHY ISN'T ANYONE TALKING ABOUT THE DEFICIT

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

Ms. HANABUSA. Mr. Speaker, the mantra for at least 4 years has been the Federal budget deficit, but for some reason, it is now rather quiet. The question we should be asking is: Why?

Could it be because last week the CBO readjusted its projections and has determined that the government's annual deficit is shrinking faster than expected—actually shrinking? The deficit which topped 10 percent of the gross domestic product in 2009 and exceeded \$1 trillion a year is now expected to shrink to \$642 billion this fiscal year. That's \$200 billion lower than expected. The deficit is expected to be 2.1 percent of the GDP by 2015, a rate that is deemed manageable by the CBO. So why aren't we talking about this?

Just so we're clear, the \$200 billion is not due to the sequestration. Shouldn't we be saying something is going right? Could it just be the implementation of the Obama policies may be working? Imagine if we implemented it all.

Mr. Speaker, let's talk about it so the people can clearly hear.

RECOGNIZING MEMORIAL DAY

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

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the courage and the bravery of those servicemen and -women who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our most cherished principles.

This Memorial Day, we honor their lives in the name of freedom, and we owe them our deepest respect and gratitude. But even more, we owe them our allegiance to the principles for which they have given so much. We reflect upon these ideals, as we have on this day for the past 145 years.

Service to one's country is a value that has been deeply ingrained in American heritage and—especially in my home State of Georgia—you would be hard-pressed to find someone who did not either personally serve or has a family member or friend who has served.

My home district has recently lost 37 of these unforgettable heroes, and it is in their memory that I would like to give my deepest regards to the servicemembers who have laid down their