

owners and investors. That simply diminishes their incentive to move forward with expansions that would create jobs.

So Mr. President, if you'd really like this economy to get going, let's start by repealing ObamaCare and cutting taxes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address all remarks to the Chair.

MEDICARE AND MEDICAID ANNIVERSARY

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

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. Speaker, yesterday marked the 48th anniversary of the establishment of Medicare and Medicaid. Since Medicare was signed into law in 1965, millions of Americans have relied on the crucial programs to live their lives in dignity, and millions more who have paid into the system are counting on Medicare to one day provide them with quality health care.

This historic commitment and pledge from our country is one of our greatest achievements. Seniors like my mother, and those living with disabilities, all understand the essential role Medicare plays in the lives of so many Americans.

In April, I held a roundtable with constituents in Elk Grove Village, Illinois. They all stressed to me the importance of protecting and preserving Medicare, but also on cracking down on abuse and fraud that exists in the program.

I have met with people living with disabilities who rely on these benefits for their health services. As we celebrate and acknowledge the great benefits of Medicare, it is important that we reinforce our commitment to the program, even as we cut down on the waste and fraud. We must continue our fight to strengthen and enhance Medicare and fulfill our 48-year-old promise to millions of hardworking Americans across this great Nation.

STOP OBAMACARE

(Mrs. ELLMERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. ELLMERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in favor of H.R. 2009, the Keep the IRS Off Your Health Care Act. ObamaCare has proven to be a terrible law that will continue to hurt individuals, employers, and our health care system.

While accurate information regarding the law has been scarce, what we know for sure is that premiums are skyrocketing, American families are confused, and doctors and nurses are afraid they will not be able to continue to care for their patients.

Businesses across the country are being forced to not only adhere to the

onerous paperwork requirements, but have been in a holding pattern for over 3 years waiting for implementation. Recently, we learned that the IRS has been targeting different groups and singling them out for intense scrutiny based on their political views. But as ObamaCare is set to be implemented, Americans are expected to trust the IRS with the responsibility of implementing this destructive law. This has proven to be unworkable and a dangerous path for our health care system and our country to be on.

CALIFORNIA AND RISING SEA LEVELS

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

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, climate change is a long-term threat to my home State of California and to all coastal States. Climate change will increase the risk of flooding and eventual submersion of millions of American low-lying homes.

Mr. Speaker, I hold up this article that a group of scientists from Princeton and the University of Arizona recently published, a journal article that quantifies State by State the coastal populations that are exposed to storm surges and sea level rise.

The researchers found that in California there are more than 138,000 housing units and over 325,000 Californians living on land that is below one meter of high tide. And in the entire United States, there are approximately 3.7 million Americans living on land below one meter of high tide.

Mr. Speaker, if Congress and the world does nothing, climate change will have a devastating impact on these 3.7 million Americans who are on the front line of climate change. And that number will only grow.

LETTER FROM A CONSTITUENT

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor with a letter from a constituent, a businessman, and I will just read parts of it:

I did not need to read about the ObamaCare health insurance tax increase that will be passed on to small businesses. It has already happened to my small firm. Last week I was advised by my insurance agent that Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois is increasing my rates by more than 38 percent.

I want to relay to you that due to a decrease in business, likely caused by uncertainty of our future, I have had to release one employee and have advised all remaining employees that the increase of health insurance premiums will be passed on to them. I was proudly able to pay 100 percent of employees' health care coverage, but after two consecutive 20 percent increases in the last two years, and the latest 40 percent increase, simple business logic requires that I pass on

this increase or simply go out of business. My employees will have less take-home pay under ObamaCare. Does anyone in Congress realize that under this still uncertain program, it is more logical for me to shut down my business and take the subsidies on one of the exchanges than to remain open?

□ 1245

THE BIPARTISAN STUDENT LOAN CERTAINTY ACT

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1911, the Bipartisan Student Loan Certainty Act.

Last month, I urged my colleagues in this House to take up and help our students because the interest rate was going to double on July 1. The Senate has already acted, and this week we have a chance to make things right.

The Bipartisan Student Loan Certainty Act will not only reverse the July 1 student loan interest rate hike, but it actually makes things better for our students.

As students around the world are acquiring higher education, master's and training, it's imperative that our students here in this country also receive the opportunities to compete on a global scale. By making higher education more accessible, H.R. 1911 accomplishes that.

When it is signed by President Obama, it will give \$25 billion in debt relief over the next 6 years. It will give students the ability to lock in the interest rate for the life of their loan so they know exactly what they are going to be paying in interest, and it will save thousands of dollars and lower interest payments.

I look forward to sending this bill to our President.

STOPPING GOVERNMENT ABUSE

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

Mr. HECK of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, in our Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson wrote that governments derived their power from "the consent of the governed." Years later, Abraham Lincoln called our American democracy a government "of the people, by the people, for the people." What would these great men think if they saw the waste and abuse so rampant in our government today?

House Republicans are committed to maintaining a government that works for the American people, not against them. That's why this week we're bringing a number of bills to the floor to do just that. We believe in an America with expanded opportunity and a more secure future for all.

There's no place in that America for massive government overreach, and

that's why the House Republicans will continue to fight it.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 31, 2013.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
The Speaker, U.S. Capitol,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on July 31, 2013 at 9:45 a.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 2167.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 2611.

That the Senate agreed to without amendment H. Con. Res. 44.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

CITIZEN EMPOWERMENT ACT

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2711) to amend title 5, United States Code, to establish certain procedures for conducting in-person or telephonic interactions by Executive branch employees with individuals, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2711

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Citizen Empowerment Act".

SEC. 2. AMENDMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Part III of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after chapter 79, the following:

"CHAPTER 79A—SERVICES TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

"Sec.

"7921. Procedure for in-person and telephonic interactions conducted by Executive Branch employees.

"§7921. Procedure for in-person and telephonic interactions conducted by Executive Branch employees

"(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to ensure that individuals have the right to

record in-person and telephonic interactions with Executive agency employees and to ensure that individuals who are the target of enforcement actions conducted by Executive agency employees are notified of such right.

"(b) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section—

"(1) the term 'telephonic' means by telephone or other similar electronic device; and

"(2) the term 'employee' means an employee of an Executive agency.

"(c) CONSENT OF EXECUTIVE AGENCY EMPLOYEES.—Participation by an employee, acting in an official capacity, in an in-person or telephonic interaction shall constitute consent by the employee to a recording of that interaction by any participant in the interaction.

"(d) NOTICE OF RIGHTS WHEN FEDERAL EMPLOYEES ENGAGED IN CERTAIN ACTIONS.—A notice of an individual's right to record conversations with employees shall be included in any written material provided by an Executive agency to the individual concerning an audit, investigation, inspection, or enforcement action that could result in the imposition of a fine, forfeiture of property, civil monetary penalty, or criminal penalty against, or the collection of an unpaid tax, fine, or penalty from, such individual or a business owned or operated by such individual.

"(e) OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE.—Any person who is permitted to represent before an Executive agency an individual under this section shall receive the same notice as required under subsection (d) with respect to such individual.

"(f) NO CAUSE OF ACTION.—This section does not create any express or implied private right of action.

"(g) DISCIPLINARY ACTION.—An employee who violates this section shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with otherwise applicable provisions of law.

"(h) PUBLIC INFORMATION CONCERNING RIGHT TO RECORD.—

"(1) POSTING ON AGENCY WEB SITES.—Within 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, each Executive agency shall post prominently on its Web site information explaining the right of individuals to record interactions with employees.

"(2) OMB GUIDANCE.—Within 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Office of Management and Budget shall issue guidance to Executive agencies concerning implementation of paragraph (1)."

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis for part III of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to chapter 79 the following:

"79A. Services to members of the public 7921".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, we have the author of this legislation before us, a principled Member of Congress who saw a problem

and sought to fix it, and we brought it before you today. We brought it before you today because we hear, and hear rightfully, horror stories of harassment that includes Federal officials at the IRS, the EPA, the SEC, the FEC, and a list of other ABCs.

The truth is that in 39 out of 50 States, every Member on a phone, every American has a right to record that conversation without asking permission of that Federal officer on the other end. But in 11 States, States that most people don't know which is which, that is muddled. When a conversation occurs between two States, it is muddled.

The gentlewoman from Kansas (Ms. JENKINS), as the author of this bill, sought, in principle, to fix that, and I'd like to yield 2 minutes to her to explain her bill.

Ms. JENKINS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I thank him for his leadership on this very important issue.

Whether I'm talking to Kansans back home or listening to witnesses at Ways and Means hearings, I've heard story after story of Federal regulators abusing their power.

What is worse, many people are afraid to share their stories of harassment or other inappropriate behavior by government officials out of fear of retaliation. The Citizen Empowerment Act will give them certified proof and help to alleviate this fear.

This bill will give Americans a new tool to protect themselves and their businesses from government overreach and abuse by expanding the rights of all citizens to allow them to record meetings and telephone conversations with Federal regulators and officials. The Citizen Empowerment Act will also ensure individuals are made aware of this right by requiring government agencies to notify them of this right.

Not only do Federal agencies get to write rules, they get to enforce them, too. In fact, a citizen is 10 times more likely to be tried by a Federal agency than by an actual court, and citizens have fewer rights during agency proceedings than in a courtroom.

The Citizen Empowerment Act will give Americans a tool to even the playing field with Federal regulators by increasing transparency and accountability within the system.

Americans deserve a government who puts its citizens first, and this is exactly what this bill does. We spend far too much time in this body debating bills to empower the government. This bill empowers Americans.

Enacting the Citizen Empowerment Act and the other nine Stop Government Abuse bills will be a positive step toward getting Big Government out of the way of our economy and rebuilding trust that has been broken by rampant abuse of Federal power.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 2711. This legislation