

study skills. They promote high school graduation, and foster parent participation in a child's academic life. CDBG supports our local Boys and Girls Clubs, the food bank, and legal aid. It's giving Santa Maria a chance to rehab Oakley Park, which benefits the entire community.

CDBG helps those in need, and it makes life a bit better for everyone. These are investments with real local impacts, and that's why cuts to this program, like the drastic ones we've been debating, also have a direct impact.

Already, important programs like Meals on Wheels are having trouble reaching all those in need due to sequestration cuts. So to slash the program in half will only add to this devastation. These aren't disposable projects. They are truly investments in our people and in our community, and that is why I urge my colleagues to stand with the central coast of California, to stand with communities across this Nation who can't afford the bill the House majority has brought to the floor.

STOP GOVERNMENT ABUSE WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONAWAY. Mr. Speaker, this week in the House, we are voting on pieces of legislation that will roll back the Obama administration's overreach. We term this effort Stop Government Abuse Week. Our message to the administration is quite simple: no more wasted tax dollars, no more abuse of power by Federal agencies. The Federal Government must be accountable to the American people, not unelected bureaucrats.

Right now, a senior Federal employee can be placed under investigation for serious misconduct, yet the Federal Government isn't allowed to put that person on leave without pay, meaning they get an extended paid vacation. That's the case with IRS official Lois Lerner, who took the Fifth Amendment and testified before Congress. She's now on paid leave while Congress continues the agency's misconduct investigation.

The Employee Accountability Act, introduced by my friend MIKE KELLY from Pennsylvania, will address this issue. It will allow agencies to place employees on unpaid leave when they are under investigation for serious offenses.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the work the House is doing this week on behalf of the American people. We are sending a very strong message to the Obama administration: enough is enough.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk today about important issues involving climate change going on all over America, all over this world. But

specifically today, I want to talk about our urban communities. Global warming is expected to increase the frequency and intensity of natural disasters, like wildfires in the West and hurricanes like Sandy on the east coast, and record drought conditions that continue for another year across the Midwest.

But in urban areas, cities like D.C., or my hometown of Minneapolis, we have something known as an urban heat island. Urban heat islands are a serious problem because urban areas tend to have temperatures 5–20 degrees warmer than rural areas, which is known as heat island effect. Heat islands are caused by a lack of natural vegetation, dark colored, impervious roads and concrete, and exhaust from vehicles and industry. As global temperatures increase, urban areas are warming at double the rate of the average global temperature, so this is a real serious issue.

Heat islands drive people to increase their use of air conditioning, which of course has a vicious effect in terms of just increasing an already serious problem. In turn, increasing the air conditioning drives up energy costs and increases power plant emissions, which contributes to the heat island in the first place.

These emissions not only contribute to global warming, they impact human health, increase emissions of carbon monoxide, mercury, and particulate matter, which leads to increased risks of heart attacks, strokes, and asthma. Particulate matter is very fine pieces that are emitted from coal plants. They go up into the air and come down, and we breathe that stuff in.

The effect of extreme heat in urban areas disproportionately affects some Americans as opposed to others. It affects anyone who lives in an urban area. But given the populations of urban areas, it affects certain communities more, including communities of color, low-income communities, and the elderly.

This housing segregation that we have in our country in which you have this disproportionate number of some populations in urban areas, concentrates racial ethnic minorities in dense environments, and that's why we see African Americans experiencing some of these heat-related hazards that have to do with everything from asthma and other sorts of issues like that. The low-income, minority, and elderly are less able to adapt and recover from these extreme climate events and are the communities most at risk from heat island effects and heat waves.

These communities are already plagued by higher pollution than wealthy, white communities. Coal plants, bus depots, and trash incinerators are disproportionately located in these areas that I speak of, and the heat island effect makes it worse.

The high cost of air conditioning, the inability to move into special heat wave shelters increases risk. Urban minorities often have more underlying health issues, such as higher rates of

asthma, as I mentioned before, which also creates susceptibility to increased pollutants in these heat islands.

In 1995, a Chicago heat wave killed more than 700 people over 5 days, mostly elderly people who couldn't escape. The European heat wave in 2003 killed 30,000 people, although some estimates put that number as high as 70,000. Socioeconomic disparities will worsen through the health and economic effects of climate change.

As global temperatures continue to rise, heat waves in urban areas are increasing in frequency, duration, and intensity; and the effect on my community of Minneapolis, and urban areas all over this country, will be devastating. This is a serious issue that we need to focus on. We need to do something about it. The time is now.

I want to thank the Safe Climate Caucus for organizing Members to discuss this issue for the public today so we can all come to a greater level of awareness about the true dangers of ignoring global climate change.

SUPPORT PATIENT OPTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BROWN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, this government is out of control. It has become too big and too intrusive. It is spending too much. It is taxing too much. It is regulating too much. It is borrowing too much. And it's sticking its ugly nose into our business too much. This must stop.

ObamaCare does every one of those things. This law is as disastrous as a train running full throttle without an engineer, speeding toward a head-on collision and wrecking everything in its tracks.

I come before you today with a solution, my Patient Option Act, H.R. 2900. My Patient Option Act will revitalize American health care, not through government interference but by giving the American people full control over their health care decisions. It will make health care cheaper for everyone. It provides coverage for all Americans, and it will save Medicare from going broke.

My Patient Option Act repeals ObamaCare in its entirety and replaces it with some patient-centered, commonsense solutions. These solutions include 100 percent deductibility for health care expenses for everyone, including insurance; flexibility for individuals and businesses to join associations where there will be a smorgasbord of health care insurance options; expanding health savings accounts that patients will own and control; freedom for consumers to purchase health insurance across State lines; and tax incentives to reward physicians who provide free care to patients who cannot afford health insurance.

My Patient Option Act accomplishes all of this, and more, in just 77 pages.

That's a stark contrast to the over 2,700-page regulatory nightmare of ObamaCare. In fact, ObamaCare's regulations are 2 million words longer than the Bible. Any bill that much longer than the Bible has to be bad for America.

My Patient Option Act is the solution that Americans need and deserve. Unfortunately, the clock is ticking and time has almost run out.

A Georgia businessman recently told me that his insurance premiums for his employees have increased by 40 percent this year, compared to last, due to ObamaCare.

Another Georgia businessman, who is an owner of several fast-food restaurants and currently employs over 200 full-time workers, recently told me that he is seriously considering letting them all go and hiring only part-time employees.

And recently, even President Obama's Health and Human Services Department has admitted that you might not be able to keep your current doctor, even if you want to. If Congress does not act soon, we will be hearing more and more of these same stories.

I'm here to tell all Americans and all American families that it doesn't have to be this way.

Mr. Speaker, if Americans want true, patient-centered, health care reform, then they must contact their Congressman and Senators and urge them to pass my Patient Option Act.

Mr. Speaker, if Americans want lower costs, coverage for everyone, and government out of the way of the doctor-patient relationship, then they must contact their Representatives and urge them to pass my Patient Option Act.

If Americans want full control of their coverage and freedom to make their own decisions in health care, then the Patient Option Act is the only true solution.

We don't have much time; but through the voices of we, the people, the American people, we can work to repeal this disastrous law and replace it with legislation that serves the best interest of my patients and all patients, not government. That's my Patient Option Act.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS IN CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow afternoon we will board our flights back to the district for the August recess. Sadly, we'll be leaving behind a lot of unfinished business.

Just yesterday, the Republican leadership pulled the catastrophe of a transportation and housing appropriations bill because it couldn't even get the votes within their own caucus.

I ask my friends, when are we going to begin to govern and work together?

When we come back from the August recess period, we will have 9 days, just 9 days left until the farm bill extension expires. But we're leaving the House without passing a true farm bill that we can conference, much less appointing any conferees to work out the differences between the two bills. The farmers, ranchers and dairymen expect better in my district.

Uncertainty swirls around the Capitol, but the only thing that seems certain here lately is that we cannot act on anything that the American people want us to that they view as no-brainers.

Take immigration reform. Over half the voters in this country think we should get this done and pass the Senate bill. Yet we are watching the summer fade into fall without even a timeline for when the House will bring up real immigration reform.

It's far too easy for us to throw up our hands and say this place is broken, but that's not why we came to Washington.

No budget, little in appropriations bills, no tax reform, little progress on immigration reform, and no farm bill.

Yet last week, the Republican leaders said that we should, instead, be measured by the laws that we repeal. Okay. Well, on that score, we've exactly repealed zero laws.

I came here to roll up my sleeves and get to work. We have real problems in this country; but we also, I think, share in real bipartisan solutions to fix those problems. All that we need is the green light.

The problem here is that the art of the political compromise has been lost. And it's about time we rediscover that art of the political compromise.

We have divided government. That's not a secret. We've had divided government in the past. And by the way, we're going to have divided government for the next 3½ years.

Let's get real. It's about time that we begin to figure out ways to work together. My hope is that when we go back home we are reminded that every vote here in the House of Representatives, the people's House, is not a litmus test, and that every issue that we deal with should not be looked at in terms of black and white, but in shades of gray.

We have a lot of challenges facing America. I hope, after the August recess, we come back here in September and that we put solving America's problems before our own political agendas.

America cannot afford to continue this three-ring circus. It's about time we begin to work together, ladies and gentlemen.

HONORING MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT ARMY STAFF SERGEANT TY MICHAEL CARTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

California (Mr. MCNERNEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Army Staff Sergeant Ty Michael Carter, who will be awarded with the Congressional Medal of Honor in recognition of his heroic actions in Afghanistan in 2009.

As the father of a veteran, I am truly honored to represent Staff Sergeant Carter, a resident of Antioch, California. The Medal of Honor is our Nation's highest military award presented for selfless sacrifice and acts of courage above and beyond the call of duty at the risk of his or her life.

Staff Sergeant Carter was born in Spokane, Washington, in 1980 and graduated from North Central High School. After high school, he enlisted in the Marine Corps and served in Japan. He had two additional deployments before being honorably discharged from the Marine Corps in the year 2002.

During this time, Staff Sergeant Carter enrolled in the Los Medanos Community College in California and studied biology. Upon the birth of his first daughter, and after traveling throughout the United States, he enlisted to serve his country as a soldier in the United States Army in the year 2008.

It was on October 3, 2009, when Specialist Carter and the 54 Members of B Troop, 3rd Squadron, 61st Cavalry Regiment came under heavy enemy fire in the Nuristan province of Afghanistan.

At great risk of his own life, Staff Sergeant Carter resupplied ammunition to help his fellow soldiers, provided first aid to a comrade, eliminated enemy troops, and risked his own life to help carry a fellow soldier from harm's way.

The actions that Mr. Carter took during this ambush were critical to the defense of the COP Keating, which was established in 2006 as a provincial reconstruction team camp located near the confluence of the Kushtowz and Landay Sin Rivers.

All of our Nation's servicemembers and their families make great sacrifices, and we can never fully repay them. It's important that we pay tribute to those who show their devotion to the United States through their service and that we ensure those who return home are provided with the services they deserve and have earned.

These brave men and women are committed to one another and to honoring the call of duty to protect our great Nation. We owe them the same respect.

I want to commend Staff Sergeant Carter and all of our Nation's veterans for their courage and dedication to this country. Our Nation has always been able to depend on the selfless actions of men and women in uniform for our very existence.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Staff Sergeant Ty Michael Carter, as well as our servicemen and women, their families and veterans, for their service to the United States.