

on the struggles going on in Egypt, Tunisia, Syria, Iran, and elsewhere in this critical and dangerous part of the world.

The yearning for freedom is a universal one, but getting there has never been easy. The Egyptians, Syrians, Tunisians, and others have taken the first step towards taking their societies back. We must stand ready to help, and we must be prepared for a long and uneven journey.

#### THE WATER RESOURCES REFORM AND DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2013

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I come from the great State of Michigan, also known as the Great Lakes State, and I have lived my entire life along the shores of this national treasure. For those of us in Michigan and the other Great Lakes States, the Great Lakes are not just a source of much of our drinking water or a place that we go to enjoy their natural beauty or recreational opportunities or where so many work and make a living; they are central to our very identity. That is why I have made the protection of the Great Lakes a principal advocacy during all of the years that I have been in public service.

The Great Lakes actually represent fully one-fifth of the freshwater drinking supply on the entire planet. They provide the drinking water supply to tens of millions in our Nation and millions more in Canada as well. They are also vital to our economy. Over 160 million tons of commercial cargo is shipped on the Great Lakes. This commerce supports over 227,000 jobs and contributes over \$33 billion to the economy.

The recreational aspect of the Great Lakes also builds our economy. Recreational boating on the Great Lakes supports over 100,000 jobs and \$16 billion in economic activity. The secondary effect of all of that means an additional 244,000 jobs and \$19 billion in additional economic activity. Of course, that includes boat manufacturers, marinas, charter operators, and other businesses as well. So, a healthy Great Lakes system is not only important to our economy in Michigan or the Great Lakes States, it is important for the entire Nation.

Today, unfortunately, the use of those waters is threatened by our inability to maintain our ports, our channels, and our harbors. A decade—we have had actually a decade—of below normal water levels and very limited or uncoordinated Federal funding for harbor dredging and infrastructure repair has dramatically curtailed shipping, and it has made, actually, some of our recreational harbors almost inaccessible. In fact, this year, many of our recreational harbors were really in crises as low water levels made the need for dredging vital to the

economic survival of so many communities.

We as a Nation, Mr. Speaker, must recognize the importance of the Great Lakes and give this natural wonder the properly coordinated support that it needs. That is why I have joined with several of my Michigan colleagues—BILL HUIZENGA and DAN BENISHEK—to introduce the Great Lakes Navigation System Sustainability Act. Our legislation is supported by the Great Lakes Maritime Task Force, the Great Lakes Metro Chambers of Commerce, the Lakes Carriers Association, the American Great Lakes Port Association, the Great Lakes Small Harbors Coalition, the National Marine Manufacturers Association, the United States Great Lakes Shipping Association, and the Great Lakes Commission, as well as the Great Lakes Governors Association.

I am very pleased that the chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, BILL SHUSTER, worked with us to include important provisions of that legislation in the Water Resources Reform and Development Act, also known as WRRDA, which we will be voting on in this House later on today.

The most important of these provisions will establish the Great Lakes Navigational System and require the Army Corps of Engineers to look at the Great Lakes system in its entirety rather than looking at it port by port when they are thinking about dredging and maintenance. This would really end the practice of pitting one port in the Great Lakes against another, and, instead, it focuses on the interdependence of all of them.

The WRRDA bill also helps recognize our recreational harbors by providing 10 percent of all the funds authorized by the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund to be directed to recreational harbors. This type of funding will allow recreational harbors across the Great Lakes to have another opportunity for needed dredging support, places like Port Huron, Lexington, Port Sanilac, Harbor Beach, Port Austin, Sebawaing, and many others—those are just in my district—but there are so many others throughout the entire basin as well.

Mr. Speaker, if you travel to the State of Michigan and visit the shores of the Great Lakes, you will find the magnificence of what we call “pure Michigan.” But, as possessive as those of us from Michigan are of the Great Lakes, we also recognize that they are “pure American,” so this incredible natural wonder deserves the recognition and protection from our entire Nation. Today, we can take a very important step forward in the protection of the Great Lakes, our magnificent Great Lakes, by passing the WRRDA bill.

I certainly urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

#### THE WATER RESOURCES REFORM AND DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2013

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

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to submit for the RECORD a summary of the transcript of the bipartisan briefing I recently hosted along with my good friend from the great State of Florida, TREY RADEL, on the crucial environmental issues facing our waterways in Florida. During a time of the most discouraging examples of partisan gridlock, we were able to come together with many people on both sides of the aisle to work toward solutions to the ongoing crisis in our waterways.

There is no denying that an environmental crisis is taking place up and down the Indian River Lagoon. Record-breaking rainfall, out-of-date engineering, and urban and agricultural runoff are all damaging our waterways. To bring attention to this important matter, we invited community members who have been directly impacted by the water so polluted with bacteria and toxic algae that health officials told people to avoid contact with the water. In an area where the economy depends on water for our local livelihood, this pollution is having devastating effects.

Members of our community took great lengths to make their voices heard in Congress. Many flew up here, others fundraised to take a bus, using money out of their own pocket to make sure that Washington heard how they have been directly impacted by polluted and toxic waterways.

Despite the government shutdown and the inability of any Federal agency officials to attend, we were pleased to see so many engaged constituents in the room with us as we spoke to many Members who have important leadership roles in the House itself—the Appropriations Committee, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and many among the Florida delegation.

At the briefing, we not only discussed the problems but the solutions, both short-term and long-term, that can only come from a mutual understanding of the problem and cooperation of local, State, and Federal entities. Solutions such as completing Everglades restoration projects like the Indian River Lagoon-South project and funding the completion of C-44 components of this project as soon as possible to grant relief to the already battered St. Lucie Estuary are critical. We must also fight for quick and effective repairs to the Herbert Hoover Dike that will allow for the safe retention of more water in Lake Okeechobee.

There was also broad agreement on the importance of passing WRRDA so we can move forward with Everglades restoration efforts that will benefit all of our communities. Additionally, WRRDA will streamline processes so ongoing and future projects can advance more efficiently and expeditiously.

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It has been almost 7 years since the last water resource bill was authorized, stalling progress on local environmental projects, so I am beyond pleased to see the House take up this important bill today.

After passing WRRDA, we need to continue to pressure for the chief support for the Central Everglades Planning Project so that these important projects can move forward as well. In the current no-spending climate in Congress, it is difficult to fight for funding for these critical projects to address the pollution impacting our local waterways, but there is a difference between smart investments and wasteful spending, which is something I have been working hard to tackle these past 10 months.

Infrastructure and environmental projects are not only crucial to improve the health of our waterways but to provide a 3 to 1 return on investment. Furthermore, funding for Everglades projects is equally matched by the State so they, too, have skin in the game, highlighting the importance of cooperation across all levels of government to work towards real solutions to address the challenges facing our waterways.

Mr. Speaker, these issues are simply too important to ignore. That is why I am here today with this bottle of polluted water behind me to show the severity of this ongoing crisis. I remain focused on this issue of great concern to our community, our environment, our economy, and our entire way of life. No one person can make all these things happen. It takes advocacy and action at all levels of government. To that end, I will include a summary of this briefing to be entered into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD to educate all Members of Congress on this important issue and the role we all play in addressing it.

#### OBAMACARE EXCHANGES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. ELLMERS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. ELLMERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the failures taking place with the launch of the ObamaCare exchange through healthcare.gov. Since October 1, this Web site has been plagued with delays, errors, and fundamental flaws in the Web site design. This prompted USA Today to call it an "inexcusable mess" and "nightmare." In addition to the technological failure, the Web site leaves Americans open to exposure of privacy information. Buried in the source code of healthcare.gov, a paragraph reads:

You have no reasonable expectation of privacy regarding any data stored on this information system. At any time, the government may monitor, intercept, search, and seize any data stored on this information system. Any data stored on this information system

may be disclosed or used for any lawful government purpose.

Consumer Reports states:

It's not worth the hassle, at least not for now. Stay away from healthcare.gov for at least another month if you can.

This is not reassuring for Americans entering personal, medical, and financial information onto a government Web site, especially when Congress is still reviewing the IRS for gross mismanagement in collecting private individual information.

John McAfee, founder of McAfee Antivirus, emphasized last Wednesday:

Millions of Americans could have their identities stolen as a result of signing up for ObamaCare.

Despite these major malfunctions and structural defects, the administration still has penalties in place for individuals that don't obtain coverage.

Mr. Speaker, this is not acceptable.

Prior to October 1, my colleagues and I emphasized the inability of the Department of Health and Human Services to implement these exchanges. Therefore, if an individual does not wish to subject themselves to the risk of identity theft, they should be allowed to make that decision without the consequence of fines forced by the Federal Government. That is why I am working on legislation right now to ensure that Americans are not being punished for failing to buy a health care plan from a dysfunctional system.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, the Associated Press reported that, to date, only 476,000 people have enrolled. Mind you, that is 476,000 Americans that are left open to identity theft. I would like to point out that this is out of 36 States enrolled in the Federally-Facilitated Marketplace—36 States. At one point, healthcare.gov posted error messages in at least 24 of those 36 States.

Further, according to the USASpending.gov, over \$600 million of taxpayer dollars have been spent setting up these failed exchanges. Mr. Speaker, this is an insult to the American taxpayers.

CGI Group, one of the main contractors for healthcare.gov, reported that the site's design was changed about a month before its debut to prevent users from comparing prices without registering for an account. Why would the administration agree to remove the price comparison option when the President has promised the country affordable health care? It is because, for some, health care rates may become simply unaffordable.

The administration announced they would provide a new "shop and browse" feature to the Web site. However, this new feature is not giving consumers the real price. In some cases, people could end up paying double what they see on the Web site. For example, CBS News ran the numbers for a 48-year-old woman in Charlotte, North Carolina, who is ineligible for subsidies. According to healthcare.gov, she would pay \$231 a month, but the actual plan on the Blue Cross and Blue Shield North

Carolina Web site costs \$360 a month. This is more than a 50 percent increase. The difference: Blue Cross and Blue Shield requests your birth date before providing more accurate estimates, further proving the point that monopolies are problematic as well, especially in North Carolina.

Hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars are being spent on a system that does not work. Therefore, there is one question we must all ask ourselves: Is the Affordable Care Act really affordable?

#### CONSEQUENCES OF GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important before we move into the weeks ahead that we take a minute and ask ourselves what happened last week during the shutdown? What were the consequences of the shutdown? What did the shutdown mean to Americans? It is important to pause and ask, What really happened? Because as the days roll by, people are going to just move on to the next thing.

Let's be clear: this irresponsible shutdown cost the economy \$24 billion in lost economic output, or about 0.6 percent of annualized growth, according to Standard & Poor's. That is \$24 billion of people not making purchases that they had planned to because they thought they had better hold on to their money because they didn't know what was going to happen. That is \$24 billion of businesses that did business with people who were Federal employees who didn't have their check or didn't know if they were going to have it.

I mean, the untold damage that the Republican majority in the House did to this economy is a shameful thing, and they did it for one reason and one reason only: to deny millions of Americans affordable health care. Now, I think that it is important to mark this moment and to be very clear about what happened and the losses we incurred. This economy lost 120,000 jobs, according to the Council of Economic Advisers; 120,000 jobs because of lower demand, because of a number of things. A number of people were losing their livelihood because of the shutdown, again, because the majority in the House sees fit to deny millions of Americans affordable health care.

Now, in the days to come now that the shutdown is over, there is no question they will try to amp up and build up the bugs in the computer system, but thousands of people are getting health care and signing up right now. The news is actually good, and there has never been a system that is new that didn't have problems. In fact, my friends on the Republican side of the aisle, I invite them to go back to Medicare part D, the prescription drug benefit in which they said that Big