

helping low-income children, along with two other jobs, and I now own my own home.

And she goes on.

By providing these safety nets, the very safety nets that we celebrated yesterday on the 50-year anniversary of the war on poverty, we have helped someone like Amy and her family lift themselves out of poverty, but we have to do that right now in helping others.

I would like to, at this point, yield some time to my colleague from Illinois, someone who has been a mentor to me my entire career in the legislature, and so glad to serve with her now in Congress, a very staunch Progressive, Representative JAN SCHAKOWSKY from the State of Illinois.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded not to traffic the well while another Member is under recognition.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. If that referred to me, I apologize.

Thank you very much for organizing this hour for the Progressive Caucus.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking about human issues that really don't lend themselves to any kind of political label. We are talking about people. And I think this is what has hurt me so much is the meanness, the meanness.

I just celebrated my 15th year here in the House of Representatives, and I have to tell you that we have disagreed across the aisle on a lot of different things, but the demonization of people who are struggling just to live a decent life. We are talking about people when we talk about the unemployed who aren't looking for the huge fancy job. They want to make enough to be able to raise their children comfortably, to be able to eat, put a roof over their head, just modest things that add up to a decent life.

Aside from all the arguments on why it is really dumb economically to not extend those unemployment benefits, that it will actually cost us jobs, 250,000—I don't know what the estimate is—if we don't put money in people's pockets that they can go out and spend, why would things that used to have a bipartisan consensus not prevail today?

In 1959, 1962, 1973, 1977, 1985, 1994, and 2003, we extended unemployment insurance benefits until the level of long-term unemployment—those are people unemployed over 6 months—fell below 1.5 percent. Today that is 2.6 percent of Americans. That is over 1 million Americans.

What are we doing? Who are we? That is what I asked myself around the holidays. We had a lot of cold weather and snow—typical Chicago in some ways—and people are celebrating and still going out and shopping and Christmas lights and Christmas trees. I was picturing—I know some of those families for whom this was so bleak and so unnecessary—that we could have, in 5 minutes before we left here, just extended those unemployment insurance benefits.

And you've got that sign there that says: Each week that we fail to act,

72,000 more people—that is a pretty hefty small town of people—will lose their benefits, people who only are qualified for those benefits if they are seeking work, three people searching for every job that is available in this country.

You talked to people who have experienced this ultimate sense of insecurity: What is going to happen to me and my family? What I hear at the end of that story when I talk to people is: I don't know what I am going to do. I don't know what I am going to do.

For many people, the fear of homelessness is just right outside their door right now. I don't get it.

We celebrated the—and I mean celebrated—the 50th anniversary of the announcement of the war on poverty and all the things that we did and that were supported for many years.

Thank you.

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

HEALTH EXCHANGE SECURITY AND TRANSPARENCY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER) for 30 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Missouri?

There was no objection.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Health Exchange Security and Transparency Act, a bill that forces the Federal Government to notify individuals if their personal information has been stolen or unlawfully accessed through an ObamaCare exchange.

Since the disastrous rollout of ObamaCare on October 1, we have heard story after story, Mr. Speaker, of security threats and privacy concerns with the troubled ObamaCare insurance exchanges, from the chief information officer at CMS claiming that “there is also no confidence that personally identifiable information will be protected,” to an administrator at CMS saying that the ObamaCare Web site “exposed a level of uncertainty that can be deemed as high risk,” to a computer security expert calling the ObamaCare Web site “a hacker's dream.”

It is clear that the ObamaCare exchanges were never ready to be launched, and it is unconscionable that this administration would expose millions of Americans' personal information to cyber threats and identity theft.

To make matters worse, there are laws already implemented that require

private companies to notify innocent victims of these security breaches. But President Obama didn't think it was necessary to live by the same rules as the private sector and decided to push his failed agenda despite senior government officials warning him that his Web site was not safe for the American people.

Every day, Mr. Speaker, I hear from far too many hardworking families in Missouri's Second District who have seen their premiums skyrocket, wages decreased, insurance coverage canceled of late, and hours cut back at work. These families are already suffering from the harsh realities of ObamaCare. To make matters worse, they have no idea whether their personal information has been stolen or not.

Just recently, Mary Ann Schaeffer wrote to me from Kirkwood, Missouri, about how worried she is that her most intimate information could be stolen from the ObamaCare exchanges. And I quote from Mary Ann Schaeffer of Kirkwood, Missouri: “I am concerned about the security of my sensitive medical records in a big government database.” Mary Ann is just one of the many people I hear from in the St. Louis region that are worried about the devastating consequences of ObamaCare.

The only way to truly protect the American people from ObamaCare is by replacing it with free market-based solutions that expand access without destroying our economy, putting the Federal Government between you and your doctor, and lowering the quality of our care. The Federal Government, Mr. Speaker, should, at the very least, be required to report any security breaches on the ObamaCare Web site to those innocent victims who, through no fault of their own, trusted a government that deceived them.

Since President Obama decided to delay the implementation of ObamaCare for unions and businesses for an entire year, don't you think the least he could do is tell hardworking Americans if their personal information has been stolen or breached?

Mr. Speaker, the simple truth is: ObamaCare is wrong for the American people, it is wrong for hardworking Missourians, and it is wrong for the people of Missouri's Second Congressional District, and it needs to be replaced immediately before any more of its harmful provisions are implemented.

I urge my colleagues to vote “yes,” a resounding “yes,” on this common-sense measure.

I would now, Mr. Speaker, yield to my good friend, the gentlelady from Tennessee, Representative DIANE BLACK, who has not only spent countless hours championing the Health Exchange Security and Transparency Act, but who has tirelessly worked to improve our Nation's health care as a small business woman and a nurse in Tennessee and now as a Member of Congress.

Mrs. BLACK. I thank the gentlelady from Missouri, my friend and my colleague.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Health Exchange Security and Transparency Act, which would provide basic protections on the healthcare.gov Web site to help Americans protect themselves from fraud and abuse. Unfortunately, we live in a time where cyber threats are rampant, and we must do what we can to make sure that Americans are protected from these threats.

John Fund at National Review recently wrote this:

Christmas shoppers were stunned to learn that computer hackers had made off with the names and other personal information of some 40 million Target customers.

But at least Target informed its customers of the security breach, as it is required by law. Healthcare.gov faces no such requirement—it need never notify customers that their personal information has been hacked or possibly compromised.

What makes this even worse is that the Department of Health and Human Services was asked to include notification provisions in the final rules for ObamaCare and they declined. Because of this decision on the part of HHS, millions of Americans' names, addresses, phone numbers, dates of birth, email addresses, and even Social Security numbers are at risk; and if they are breached by the government, they would never have to tell them.

Consider that as Americans who seek health care insurance sign onto the Federal exchange, they are inserting their personal information into a Web site that has never had a full end-to-end security test. In fact, CMS's Chief Information Security Officer, Theresa Fryer, stated in a draft memo that the Federal exchange "does not reasonably meet security requirements" and that "there is no confidence that personal identifiable information will be protected."

Even worse, experts at the credit agency Experian recently warned that the "health care industry by far will be the most susceptible to publicly disclosed and widely scrutinized data breaches in 2014."

So Experian says that it is the health care that stands the greatest risk. This prediction was based in part on reports of security risks posed by the healthcare.gov Web site since the health care law's infrastructure was put together too quickly and haphazardly.

Mr. Speaker, this Web site was never ready to go on October 1. The very least we can do is to require that the Federal Government notify someone if their personal information has been hacked. That way, at the very least, they have a chance to fend off identity theft and cyber attacks and hopefully avoid another nightmare scenario like the one we saw that happened to Target shoppers.

I urge my colleagues in the House to support this bill and for our colleagues in the Senate to swiftly send it to the President's desk.

□ 1845

Mrs. WAGNER. I thank the gentlelady from Tennessee, Representative DIANE BLACK, for her supreme leadership in this area. This is her bill. This is her piece of legislation. It has been something she has worked on tirelessly for years and has seen its exposure in both the private sector and now, unfortunately, at the Federal Government level. So I thank her for her leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield to my good friend, Representative RICHARD HUDSON. I thank him very much. He is a freshman Member and a dear friend and colleague, a leader in our freshman class. I thank him, not only for his work on the Homeland Security and Agriculture Committees, but also for the work that he has done in dealing with health care on the Education and the Workforce Committee.

It is now my pleasure to yield to the gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. RICHARD HUDSON.

Mr. HUDSON. I thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you that my colleague from Missouri has been a true leader in Congress.

It is a real honor to serve with you, and I thank you for your leadership, particularly on this important issue.

ObamaCare is an absolute disaster. We have seen disastrous impacts back home in North Carolina with the loss of jobs. I talk to folks every day when I go home. I go home every weekend. I travel the district. I talk to businesses, and folks tell me that they have never sat on more capital. The reason they are doing that is that they don't know what the costs of health care are going to be. So we have got businesses out there that could be expanding, that could be hiring people, but because of this health care law—because of the uncertainty created by it, because of the rising costs—we have got businesspeople who are not hiring. That is why we are not seeing job growth like we ought to see. That is why this is the flattest, longest recession we have seen in our country's history.

This awful health care law is also destroying the greatest health care system in the world. We are seeing premiums increase. I get letters and emails every day from my constituents who tell me their premiums have gone up. I talked to a woman the other day who is working three jobs. Her husband is working part-time because he can't find full-time work, but she is working three jobs just so she can pay for health care. That was before the premium increase.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen so many folks who have had their plans canceled. It has been said that the lie of the century is that, if you like your health care, you can keep it. People are seeing their health care plans canceled, and it is going to get worse because, when businesses have to start looking at whether they can afford to keep folks on their health care or not—whether the math adds up for them,

whether they can afford to do that given all the new, excessive mandates—we are going to see more people lose their insurance. It is an absolute disaster.

I am committed to doing everything I can to repeal this law and replace it because, at the end of the day, this is about people, and in this country—the greatest country in the history of the world—we can do better than this. We can offer health care that is the world's best quality health care at a price that people can afford, and we can put people in charge of their health care decisions, not bureaucrats in Washington like this awful law does, so I am committed to repealing this law.

In the meantime, I urge my colleagues to support the bill that is coming to the floor tomorrow, a bill that deals with one of the disastrous aspects of this law that I haven't mentioned yet, and that is the risk to millions of Americans that their personal information can be divulged—can be stolen—because of the lack of security on the ObamaCare Web site. This is a horrendous problem. Millions of Americans are at risk, and there is no accountability. So what we are asking for is to put that accountability in place, that if people's personal information is lost, those folks have to be notified.

The Federal Government thinks that businesses should live by that standard. The Federal Government says that States that have set up their exchanges should live by that standard. I say that the Federal Government ought to live by the same standard. If that personal information is compromised, then the individual should be notified, and the government should take responsibility and rectify the situation.

This is simple, commonsense legislation that I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, I hope our colleagues in the other body, and I hope our President will support. We owe it to the American people to do the right thing—to make sure their information is secure. If something happens, God forbid, we must do the right thing and notify those individuals. We rectify the situation. We take responsibility for it.

So I urge my colleagues to support this legislation. It is the right thing to do by the American people. I urge them to vote "yes" tomorrow.

Mrs. WAGNER. I thank the gentleman from North Carolina, Representative RICHARD HUDSON, for his leadership in this area and for giving voice to not just the Health Exchange Security and Transparency Act but to the jobs issue. Certainly, what ObamaCare has done is create nothing but a part-time workforce. This is about access to care. It is about cost. It is about millions of Americans who have lost their coverage. It is about the deception of the American people. It is about a government bureaucracy—a Federal bureaucracy—telling the American people what is in their best interest.

You, the American people—your constituents, Congressman HUDSON—know

what is in their best interests when it comes to their health care and their most intimate details, whether it has to do with their personal medical records and information or whether it has to do with their costs, their coverage, their premiums, their copays. There is so much that must be repealed and replaced in this law. At the very least, what the Federal Government can do is to protect the integrity of their most private and personal information.

I thank the gentleman from North Carolina.

It is now my great privilege to yield to my good friend, Representative JAMES LANKFORD from Oklahoma. He is our leader and our chairman on the Republican Policy Committee, and he is a friend and a colleague at the leadership table. I thank him most especially for the work that he does on the Oversight and Government Reform Committee, which is, Mr. Speaker, monitoring the implementation of healthcare.gov and of the Affordable Care Act.

I am now pleased to yield to the gentleman from Oklahoma, Mr. JAMES LANKFORD.

Mr. LANKFORD. I thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for your oversight of this evening. The gentlelady and I do not agree at all on football, she being from Missouri and my being an Oklahoma State fan, but we do agree on this. This is a critical area, and it gets to the basic element of what we do as a Nation and what a government is supposed to do.

A government is designed to protect and to serve the people. The people don't serve the government. The government serves the people. The government is set to allow people to be able to live their lives as they choose. Then along comes the Affordable Care Act, where the government looks down at the people, literally, and says, "I am going to make better decisions for you. Instead of your choosing your doctor, instead of your choosing your hospital, instead of your choosing your insurance, I am going to pick a group of insurance policies and hospitals and doctors I like as the government, and you get to pick from my list." It removes those choices from individuals to then set up a Web site and say, "You are required to go on this Web site and enter your information on this Web site."

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how you handle shopping online, but when I shop online, I am careful of what Web sites I go to. I want to make sure there are security protocols and there is some backing to that so I am not entering information onto some site where I don't know how the security is handled. But this one is different. On this one, the power of the Federal Government is coming down on an individual to say, "I don't care what you think about the security of this site. Enter your information there, and not only enter your information there, enter your children's information there."

Chief Information Security Officer Teresa Fryer, she is the one who was set to be able to sign off on the security protocols for the Web site when it was to be launched, but in September, she refused to sign off and to put her name onto the exchanges and the data hub and say that it was ready to go and that the security was there. In fact, her statement was that there was a high risk of security and that there had been no end-to-end testing of this site, and she refused to sign off on the security. This is the chief information security officer who was assigned to oversee that for the government. Instead, it was pushed up to Marilyn Tavenner, the Director of CMS, to have to make the signoff because the person under her refused to do it.

Should Americans be concerned in entering their information? Absolutely, they should be concerned in entering their information because there is still no certification that this is fully tested, fully approved and that there are not serious vulnerabilities.

In the first week that the site was launched, the Federal Government brought in what is called a "white hacker," someone who is going to come in and test the system, try to hack into the system. Were they successful? Absolutely, they were successful. They found multiple vulnerabilities in the site, itself, and then reported it back to CMS. There are a lot of security vulnerabilities there.

Is this an issue? Yes, but as ironic as all that is, a government that is set up to serve the people is actually trying to protect itself and not report when there is a problem.

You see, when Target had 40 million credit cards stolen in a very rare incident for a retailer like that—my family's being one of those—we were all notified. We were told, "You are at risk. Here is what has occurred, so go change your credit card. Go protect your identity," because Target has the responsibility to protect us and to be able to let us know you have got a risk.

The Federal Government right now is saying, "If someone breaks into our system, we have the responsibility to protect the Federal Government and not to let anyone know," instead of protecting the individual. That is government on its head. Government is designed to serve and protect the people, not to have them say, "I can't tell you that information because it will look bad for the Federal Government." No.

This bill does a basic thing. It says the people are more important than the program that the government has set up—the people are—and that if their information has been stolen, if there has been a compromise to that information, they should be informed of that so that they can take the steps that are necessary to make sure they and their children who they have entered on their site have their information protected in the days ahead.

This is the right thing to do. This is not some blanket partisan issue. We

would want this in every aspect of every Web site that the Federal Government has, whether that be IRS information, whether that be ObamaCare information, whether that be information on an EPA computer. If it is compromised, that citizen should know so steps can be taken to be able to protect himself. It is a reasonable protection for the American people. That is why I think this is a reasonable thing to be able to do. Quite frankly, we believe that the Affordable Care Act will be completely repealed and that the American people will have the ability to choose for themselves again rather than have the Federal Government say we are going to make choices for you. Until that day comes, it is a reasonable thing to at least begin with this.

With that, I thank the gentlelady from Missouri. Again, I can't root for your football team, but I can stand with you on this issue.

Mrs. WAGNER. I appreciate the comments of the gentleman from Oklahoma, who is a good friend and leader.

We won't debate the outcome of the Cotton Bowl here in the well of the floor today—that will stand on its own merit—but I do appreciate his leadership on this very important health care issue. I appreciate his leadership on the Republican Policy Committee for our party and the work that he does tirelessly to communicate those in a way that is about serving the people, which is, at the end of the day, why we are here.

Government should be here to serve the people, and we have not put the proper protections in place. What is good enough for the private sector and the States ought to be more than good enough for the Federal Government. Certainly, the American people are worthy of these kinds of protections.

While I will say over and over again that ObamaCare is wrong for the American people—that it is wrong for hardworking Missourians and that it is certainly wrong for the people of the Second District—and that it needs to be replaced immediately before any more harmful provisions are implemented, at the very least, what the government can do is require that we report any security breaches on the ObamaCare Web site to these innocent victims who, through no fault of their own, trusted a government that has once again potentially deceived them.

So, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues again to vote "yes" on this commonsense measure. Tomorrow, let's all stand for the American people and in service to them rather than as a government that is not telling them what is best for them but is truly serving their interests and serving their needs. Please, stand and vote "yes" on the Health Exchange Security and Transparency Act.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I yield back the balance of my time.

FINDING COMMON GROUND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 30 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me thank the Speaker for his courtesies and the leader for her courtesies for the opportunity to share on the floor of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I would offer to say to my colleagues who spoke earlier that we all recognize that the Affordable Care Act has generated opportunities for 9 million Americans, and it is growing. Let's find common ground. We have a law that is legal and affirmed by the United States Supreme Court, but it is affirmed by what is most important: hungry Americans needing good health care to save their lives and the lives of their families.

□ 1900

Frankly, I believe that there needs to be security for all of the Web sites of Federal agencies, rather than have bills that appear to be attacking the Affordable Care Act again, after 46 attempts to repeal it. Let's find a way that we can work together to secure extensively the entire Web sites carefully that are utilized by the Federal Government.

But I have the opportunity and I want to cover, Mr. Speaker, an array of issues that I think are important as we begin this new year. I do want to wish everyone a happy new year. But as I do so, since I come from Houston, and have been a member of the House Science Committee for 12 years before moving to Homeland Security, I want to congratulate NASA and the White House.

First, NASA, for the miraculous and unbelievable space walk just about a week or so ago by two outstanding astronauts. Space walks are not often done. They are much more difficult—in fact, extremely difficult—than one might imagine, as you watched what seemed to be a beautiful effort of activity in space.

I want to congratulate them. That is science. That is genius. That is what these astronauts trained for. They are our neighbors. I was with them over the holiday. I want them to know on the floor of the House that this was outstanding work.

I want to congratulate the White House because, as many of us have advocated over the years, my colleague who is no longer in the House, Congressman Nick Lampson, and myself signed many letters to extend the life of the space station. I am very pleased that it is now to extend the space station for 4 years. I am optimistic when that 4 years is nearing, there will be another assessment that there is more life in the international space station—opportunity for major research, including, when I was on the Science Committee, cancer research in particular, heart disease, stroke, aging. Our

former Senator, John Glenn, took a second ride into space as a member of the United States Senate to test space travel on those who are aging.

Congratulations to NASA and the international space station. It speaks to the genius of America. It speaks to the aspirations and hopes of children around the world. It focuses on the emphasis in the United States on science, technology, engineering, and math, or STEM. Teachers continue to emphasize to our children the importance of those disciplines, and it gives us great hope.

And that is a lot of what I will talk about tonight: hope. For when we think of hope, we must have a broad definition that it includes all Americans. In fact, I believe from the very moment of the dumping of the tea in the Boston Harbor, the Founding Fathers of this Nation, in spite of all of the possible inequities like the holding of slaves, had hope. They left their places of persecution because they had hope.

And we have grown through the ages, from the 1600s, 1700s, 1800s, 1900s, the 20th century, and the 21st century. It has all been around hope. We were hopeful the turn of the century, even as World War I was flaring. We were hopeful even as the 1928–1929 collapse was happening. We were hopeful even with the horrific, heinous acts of World War II, with the interment and the Holocaust. But people were hoping that we would save people and get out of the dastardliness of that.

We were hopeful in the fifties. We as African Americans were hopeful as we marched in the 1950s and 1960s. We were hopeful with the Thurgood Marshall argument before the United States Supreme Court on *Brown v. Board of Education*. We were hopeful.

Now we come to a situation of wealth inequality. We must assure those who fall in that gap of where they are not where they should be, through no fault of their own, but because of this increasing gap.

For example, the wages of those in the top 1 percent—those making \$352,900-plus—their income grew 281 percent from 1979 to 2007. For the bottom 20 percent, their income grew 16 percent, those making less than \$20,000. For those making \$34,000, it grew 23 percent. For those making \$34,000 to \$50,000, 25 percent.

There is wealth inequality in this Nation.

Some would argue some of that is inherited wealth, some of that is capital gains, some of that is stock revenue. It is wealth inequality.

I am moved by the words of Justice Brandeis:

We can either have democracy in this country, or we can have great wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both.

That is not snatching wealth from someone who has worked hard. It is to even up the opportunity for that gap—281 percent growth for the 1 percent, and numbers like 23 and 25 and 38 per-

cent for the working middle class. We need to do better.

And so I think we need to start by stop quarreling about the unemployment benefits extension. We did it under President Bush, with no offsets, and, as well, for about 5 years with President Bush even acknowledging that when people work and invest in this Nation and they fall on bad times, give them a transitional bridge.

Some would say our unemployment is going down. My friends, on the chronically unemployed, it is the highest it has ever been, at 2.6 percent. Now that is growing to 1.3 million in 2013. It will go up to 3.64 million.

So I am not asking for the whole piece. I had a bill that said 1 year. Let's extend it for 3 months on an emergency basis and then begin to discuss how we can fund it.

There are 68,000 jobless workers that are in Texas, and we expect that as it grows in 2014 to 1.9 million and more—as I said 3.6 million and growing—it will be 106,900 Texans.

I have spoken to some of those Texans, and I have heard the stories of a welder who liked his job, was laid off, through no fault of his own, and needs this transitional funding so that he can be presentable for a job. Or a person in technology, administrative assistant, or somebody who worked in home health.

I believe that we have a legitimate basis for the creation of 200,000 jobs—a real dent in the economy and an acknowledgment that the unemployment rate in the United States in 2012 was 8.1 percent. States range from 3.1 percent, to Texas, which is 6.8 percent. Missouri is 6.9 percent. We have 5 percent and 5.7 percent. We have 7 percent in Alaska. Delaware is 7.1 percent. It goes all over the gamut. The individuals are not able to find work because for every job, there are three persons looking.

It generates into inequality of wealth. There is nothing that will refute this except for a transitional hand-up for those unemployed. And, yes, job creation.

My good friends, the Republicans, say they passed a bill on job creation last year. Yes, they did. And we have a bill on job creation, the Jobs bill. That seems to me a compromise in the making. That seems to me an opportunity for us to sit around the table and talk about technology and then talk about other aspects of job creation, because people have to be trained and retrained.

This week I will introduce a bill that is studied not as a bill introduced by a Democrat, but studied for the substance of the bill, called the New Chance for a New Start in Life Act of 2014. This is where you invest in people. It creates an opportunity for someone who is unemployed and still on their unemployment benefit—remember, they have worked and this is unemployment insurance—to get a stipend for certain accredited specific job training that ties to the market.