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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE IN NEVADA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAMALFA). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HORSFORD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, right now, thousands of Nevadans have the full-time job of looking for work. It has gotten worse for many since December 28 of last year, when emergency unemployment insurance benefits for many expired.

There are now over 2 million Americans, Mr. Speaker, who have been cut off from unemployment insurance because of Congress' failure to act. That includes 26,023 Nevadans. These are not numbers; these are real people.

Every week that Congress fails to act, it is projected that an additional 842 Nevadans will lose their benefits each week during the first half of 2014.

Nevada's economy has lost over \$54 million because Congress has stalled; but I, along with many of my colleagues, have not forgotten about our constituents.

Today, Democrats will sign a discharge petition to force Speaker BOEHNER and the House Republicans to bring up a bill to extend unemployment benefits for all Americans who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own.

These benefits are used to put food on the table, to put gas in the car, so that they can go look for an interview and to pay for rent. Extending these unemployment benefits used to be bipartisan.

On December 14, 2002, in his weekly radio address, then-President George W. Bush scolded Congress, saying, "No final bill was sent to me extending unemployment benefits for about 750,000 Americans whose benefits will expire on December 28."

He went on to say, "These Americans rely on their unemployment benefits to pay for the mortgage or rent, food, and other critical bills. They need our assistance in these difficult times, and we cannot let them down."

The unemployment rate in December 2002 had just hit 6 percent. Congress then extended unemployment benefits by a vote of 416-4. If it was an emergency then, it is an emergency now. It is time to do the right thing and extend unemployment insurance benefits for Americans.

It is an emergency for my constituents, like Alfordeen, who I met at a local Workforce Connection center as she searched for work.

It is an emergency for Monty, who recently signed up for Medicaid be-

cause of the Affordable Care Act. He is homeless now; and because Congress failed to act, his unemployment insurance has been cut.

It is an emergency for Tamika, who I brought as my guest to the State of the Union. She is an electrician, and she knows what it means to work hard, but has fallen on hard times and can't find work.

The Nevadans on unemployment insurance that I meet are scrambling to make ends meet, and no one wants to live on unemployment insurance; and no, Mr. Speaker, they are not lazy.

Despite repeated Democratic efforts, Republicans in Congress refuse to listen and have callously rejected restoring this vital economic lifeline that serves as a financial bridge for those who are looking for work, so this discharge petition is an extraordinary step.

But for my constituents, there is no time for politics, and there is no time for waiting. Action to create jobs and build an economy that works for everyone must start with renewing unemployment insurance benefits for those Americans who were laid off at no fault of their own. It is time to extend unemployment insurance now.

I encourage the Speaker, after this discharge petition is signed by Members, to bring up a vote so that we can provide this important lifeline to 2 million Americans, 26,000 Nevadans, families, and veterans who desperately need this benefit.

REPAY SUPPLIES ACT OF 2013

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, every day, teachers across our Nation reach into their own pockets to pay for classroom supplies like books, software, and pencils, without ever being reimbursed by their schools; and since 2002, teachers could at least count on a \$250 above-the-line tax deduction to help defray the cost of these purchases.

But at the end of last year, this tax deduction was allowed to expire, meaning that teachers are not able to claim it on their individual returns this tax season or count on it next year, as they continue to purchase supplies for their classrooms and their students.

The REPAY Supplies Act, introduced by CAROL SHEA-PORTER and cosponsored by more than 50 of our colleagues from both parties, aims to fix this problem and make the educator expense deduction permanent.

Ms. SHEA-PORTER and I were disappointed to learn that this modest deduction was not included in the recent tax reform proposals, and we will send a letter in the coming days to ask that a hearing on the REPAY Supplies Act be held as soon as possible.

I hope that my colleagues will join us in signing this letter to the Ways and Means Committee and give teachers

the opportunity to testify before Congress about the impact the deduction has had on their checkbooks and on their classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, I am a former Florida-certified teacher, and I know how important it is that students come to school prepared and ready to learn; but without the basic supplies needed to take part in lessons, students are put at a disadvantage in the classroom, forced to rely on outdated materials, and without essential learning tools, and too often, teachers go into their own pockets to make up the difference.

For many educators, teaching is more than a full-time job. They arrive at the school while many of us are still getting ready for work. They stay late into the evening. They prepare lesson plans, grade papers, and deal with parents and grandparents, like us, who can admittedly be a handful when guaranteeing that their child is receiving the best education possible.

Teachers care deeply about their students and are often willing to sacrifice personal needs in order to provide them with the best learning experience possible. According to the latest status of the American public school teacher report by the National Education Association, educators are spending approximately \$477 per year on basic school supplies for their students and their classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, we all want the best for our children. We work hard every day in this Congress to make sure that our children have a bright future; and education, we know, is a key to this success, an essential component of that brighter future that we are trying to create for the next generation.

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But it doesn't seem to make a whole lot of sense that we are hamstringing the very people we have entrusted with their education. Teachers are giving up their own time and money to help students learn and be engaged in school. The least we can do is to provide them with this modest \$250 deduction to help mitigate the financial and personal sacrifices that they are already making.

Every 2 years since 2002, Congress has come together in a bipartisan manner to extend this deduction on behalf of our country's educators. By making this tax deduction permanent, Congress can give teachers certainty that at least some of their purchases will be paid back, that it will improve access to essential learning materials, and that it will give our educators the recognition they deserve.

I urge Members to join Ms. SHEA-PORTER and me in this fight, and I look forward to working with all of us to ensure that our Nation's teachers and our children have the education and the tools necessary to succeed.

PERSONALIZE YOUR CARE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Recently, the Reverend Billy Graham, in his latest book, talked about the situation that families face in the difficult circumstances surrounding end of life.

Reverend Graham said:

Refusing to act on the practical issues that confront us as we grow older or simply ignoring them often becomes a sure recipe for turmoil and conflict within a family.

Former Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, who was a physician long before he entered politics, said in an op-ed that appeared in one of the Capitol Hill publications:

In the absence of advanced care planning, patients are much more likely to receive medical interventions that can actually prolong or worsen their suffering and will certainly increase expense for their loved ones.

Yesterday, I had an opportunity to work with the American Society of Oncology, who gave us further evidence. They have a report and recommendations that are coming forward that I think ought to be commended to each and every one of us. They pointed out that palliative care is not an either/or choice in terms of therapies. They found in one study that people who receive both palliative care and chemotherapy lived 3 months longer and more comfortably than people who just got the medical intervention.

Additionally, further in their study, they pointed out that it isn't just the patient; it is the people who help serve ill patients who receive palliative care therapy. They suffer less emotional stress. ICU and hospital deaths are associated with more psychiatric illness among bereaved caregivers compared with home hospice.

Yet, as they pointed out, the sad truth is, for many insurance companies and our Federal Government, that although patients are entitled to make informed choices about their palliative care and treatment options, our Nation's health care system currently places no value on conversations that can guide these decisions.

It is true; Medicare will pay \$100,000 on a complex surgical procedure on a 90-year-old woman with terminal cancer, but it won't pay \$200 for her and her family to understand the circumstances that they face, understand what their choices are and make sure that their choices, whatever they are, are respected.

It, frankly, is embarrassing to me that Congress and the administration have not been able to respond to an issue that is supported by 90 percent of the American public, that will cost us no money, and that will assure that patients receive better treatment and we reduce the stress on their families.

That is why my friend, Congressman PHIL ROE, himself a physician from Tennessee, and I have introduced the Personalize Your Care Act, H.R. 1173. This would provide for voluntary advance care planning consultation in Medicare and Medicaid every 5 years or

in case there is a change in health status. It would provide grants to establish or expand physician orders for life-sustaining treatment programs, require that certified electronic health records display current advance directives and physician orders for life-sustaining treatment—what people want—and help make sure that their wishes follow them when they cross State lines.

Currently, we have over 50 bipartisan cosponsors of this simple, common-sense approach to give American families what they need and what they say they want. I would strongly urge my colleagues to look at this legislation, to join us in cosponsoring it, and move in Congress and with the administration to remedy this serious oversight.

THE ENFORCE ACT

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

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the ENFORCE Act.

When crafting the timeless document that is our Constitution, the Founding Fathers emphasized the need to prevent the emergence of an imperial monarch. In their wisdom, they gave Congress the power to make laws and tasked the President with the responsibility to enforce those laws—not just the laws he agrees with or the laws that are politically convenient, but every law.

Mr. Speaker, President Obama has not lived up to this responsibility. By picking and choosing which laws are worthy of enforcement, this administration is undermining the very foundation of our representative democracy.

The ENFORCE Act seeks to restore the balance of powers that the Framers of our Constitution envisioned. The Constitution grants Congress—not the President—the power to make the laws. Mr. Speaker, this is why I support the ENFORCE Act, to provide Congress with the ability to push back against the Obama administration's executive overreach.

EXTEND FEDERAL UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

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

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, sometimes you just have to say enough is enough. I stand before you today in the hopes that we can come together and understand that today is that day. Enough is enough.

Federal unemployment insurance must be extended—and extended quickly. It is time. In fact, it is past time. There are now more than 2 million Americans struggling to get some kind of existence in place each day after having this critical lifeline cut off this past December. The number climbs each day.

I could talk to you about the human toll of this disgraceful play of putrid and petty partisan politics, like the 57-year-old woman preparing to live in her car, the 34-year-old mother wondering how she will pay rent and feed the kids at the same time, and the 47-year-old man who made himself a career in manufacturing but lost his job due to layoffs a year ago and now describes himself as “in a panic.”

These and millions of other Americans, including almost 35,000 in my home State of Missouri alone, are hard-working people who have played by the rules and found themselves out of work through no fault of their own. And now new data shows that some 200,000 of those who have been brushed aside are veterans. They have gone to Iraq. They have gone to Afghanistan. These are men and women we should not throw aside.

Let's stop the harmful and fact-free rhetoric that paints these fellow Americans—our neighbors, our friends, and our veterans—as people trying to game the system, people trying to get something for nothing, people who just “don't want to work.” Phooey. Rats. Sheesh. Yecch. It is time for us to act.

The contrary is true. Recipients of unemployment insurance are a very diverse group, with almost half having completed at least some college and almost 5 million of them holding bachelor's degrees or higher. The stereotypes don't work here; and when we stereotype, we move our constituents to corroborate.

These are people for whom the stakes could not be higher. These are people who have worked all or most of their lives and gotten hit—and hit hard—in the recession that ominously hit in 2008. These are people who want to work, spend their days trying to find work, and now are slowly sinking into a financial abyss while we here in Washington play games.

Sometimes you just have to say enough is enough. There are times when we must just put politics aside and act on what is in the best interests of the country.

It is my hope, Mr. Speaker, that this Congress will act—and act quickly.

REMEMBERING COLONEL GERALD F. RUSSELL

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, the world recently lost a great American hero and one among the last remaining of the Greatest Generation, Colonel Gerald F. Russell of Centre County, Pennsylvania. Today, I rise to honor the life and the legacy of this brave combat veteran. One of only two surviving Iwo Jima battalion commanders, Colonel Russell passed away on Monday, February 24, 2014, at the age of 97. It is an honor to have called Gerry my friend.