

She wrote about where things stand with reforming mental health this week, 13 months after her initial letter, and discussed the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act. She said:

Considering our limited resources, it just makes sense to help those who are most in need. That was the rationale behind the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act.

She continued to call for what is needed to help our seriously ill children, saying it is:

access to medical care for the 11 million people who suffer from schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depression. The bill seeks to accomplish this goal by empowering parents, increasing acute care beds, and promoting assisted outpatient treatment for as many as 50 percent of schizophrenia sufferers whose symptoms include anosognosia, or lack of awareness of their illness.

The bill also addresses the critical shortage of child psychologists, where there's only one for every 7,000 children in the U.S., with funds for telepsychiatry, and seeks to reform SAMHSA by redirecting funds for community-based care toward evidence-based programs.

The Wall Street Journal praised the bill, noting that SAMHSA, the government agency charged with funding community mental health treatment, has little or no focus on medically driven care, and of its 537 full-time employees, only two are physicians.

Over the past months, I have received an enormous outpouring of support from parents and caregivers of loved ones who have serious mental illness. They know this bill takes mental illness out of the shadows of ignorance, despair, and neglect and into the bright light of hope.

Each week, I will come before the House and share more stories like Liza's. I encourage my colleagues to join me in this endeavor by sponsoring the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act, H.R. 3717. Where there is real help, there is real hope.

SAFE CLIMATE CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a member of the Safe Climate Caucus.

After 12 months of the 113th Congress, Republicans continue to push their anticlean energy, antienvironment, climate-denying agenda. Although we have taken very few votes in this Congress over the past year, we have taken more than 100 votes that are antienvironment. Those included:

20 votes that would weaken the Clean Air Act;

20 votes that would prevent Federal efforts to curb greenhouse gas carbon pollution;

51 votes to protect oil and gas special interests;

37 votes to weaken the Clean Water Act;

27 votes to slash funding for clean energy and energy efficiency.

I don't enjoy pointing out that protecting our air and our water has become a partisan issue, but I must point out that Republicans are still sacrificing the climate and our environment for the benefit of a few wealthy special interests.

It is cold outside today in much of the U.S., and some are saying that this is proof that global warming is a hoax. How misinformed that is. The cold wave in the midlatitudes of North America is a result of warm patches in the oceans and the atmosphere diverting the jet stream and driving arctic air southward.

Climate change doesn't mean warmer air everywhere, every day. It means more fluctuations, in other words, droughts, storms, and temperature changes. They are—and will be—greater.

It is going to be warmer tomorrow and the next day and for the next 100 years, on average, until we get serious that this is the most pressing environmental threat on our planet—global climate change.

The way we produce and use energy is the greatest insult to our planet, not only causing injury and death through pollution, but adversely changing the world's climate with very dangerous, deadly results.

We should support the President's climate action plan.

MEDICARE BILL

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

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, last week, a news report revealed that a hospital in Houston, Texas, my home State, was unable to pay dozens of its employees during the holidays due to a new Medicare payment contractor. Nearly 150 employees, ranging from doctors to nurses to administrators, missed several paychecks because the hospital's Medicare payment facilitator is taking too long to process Medicare claims for reimbursement.

Unfortunately, this is a growing problem plaguing the medical facilities and hardworking employees across the country. That is why my bill, the Medicare Established Provider Act, should come to the House floor for a vote quickly.

H.R. 3168 will help alleviate the reimbursement backlog by creating a trusted provider system. Like this hospital in Texas, there are many established Medicare providers with a proven history of timely, valid claims. They should be rewarded with prompt reimbursements rather than put in limbo for months or years at a time.

Allowing this bill to pass would allow companies and small businesses to expand and would streamline the process for these trusted providers. As the backlog of claims continues to rise, the livelihood of employees and businesses

should not be put at risk. I hope this bill will get serious attention and bring commonsense business principles to this industry.

In God we always trust.

EPIC FAILURE OF FOREIGN POLICY

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

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, it was a beautiful September day in 2001 as I was driving to work and I hear that a plane hits the World Trade Center. I was a newly minted private pilot at the time, and I remember thinking, How could a plane fly into a big building? And then I heard that another plane hit the other tower. Eventually, I heard one hit a field in Pennsylvania and the Pentagon not too far from here.

I realized that America was a country under attack. It was under attack by an ideology that believes that anybody that thinks differently than their brand of theology is not just wrong, but that they are worthy of death. In fact, it takes that belief and actually implements it by killing innocent men, women, and children, including folks of their own religious ideology.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of that, America became a generation that went to war to defeat this ideology. I am a veteran of the wars. I spent quite a bit of time in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the other day that al Qaeda, America's number one enemy, raised the black flag over Fallujah, an area that the United States Marines, who fought harder than they have any battle since Vietnam, fought to achieve and take over and bring peace to.

Mr. Speaker, al Qaeda raised the black flag over Fallujah. This is an epic failure of American foreign policy and an epic resurgence of America's chief enemy.

In 2011, President Obama had an opportunity to make a decision about whether America would continue to show its support for a free Iraq, whether America would continue to be the intercessor between difficult back-and-forths and continue to bring people together in Iraq as we did during the surge, which the President opposed and now we are finding out may actually have been for political reasons. Shock-

er. We are finding out, Mr. Speaker, that al Qaeda now has a town very close to Baghdad. This is a failure of American foreign policy.

If you look into Syria, Mr. Speaker, you see a brutal dictator that kills people and has no compunction about killing innocent women and children just to maintain power. In essence, he has become a strong partner to the United States in order to take chemical weapons out of his arsenal.

Yet as another part of Syria, you see not the moderate forces of opposition

to Mr. Assad, but you now see al Qaeda-related forces overpowering moderate opposition to Assad. You see that because of America's foreign policy, which said we supported the Free Syrian Army but, in reality, has not supported the Free Syrian Army.

If you look in Egypt, you see the Egyptian people stand up and say, We don't want to have one dictator replaced by another. We don't want the Muslim Brotherhood to run our country and change our constitution.

But we have no idea where the President is at on this. We have taken a very important ally in the Middle East and basically told them we are not interested in their future.

Look at the instability in Lebanon and the questions with the people of Afghanistan about what is going to happen post-2014, as America committed to defeating al Qaeda and defeating the Taliban. I could go on and on. Look at the deal we have with Iran, basically giving Iran the option of continuing to enrich uranium.

Mr. Speaker, 5 years ago, I could not have written a sadder story about where American foreign policy could be. What I see now in the United States is that our allies no longer trust us and our enemies no longer fear us.

Mr. Speaker, the United States needs to use limited air power in Iraq to push al Qaeda back out of Iraq. We need strong intelligence assets to work with the government of al-Maliki to ensure al Qaeda has no foothold in Iraq again.

It is not too late to reverse the tragic foreign policy consequences and what we have seen in the Middle East. But, Mr. Speaker, this has to be done today. This has to be done now.

Americans have sacrificed blood for a free Iraq and a free Afghanistan, and we cannot let that sacrifice be in vain.

OPPOSITION TO UNESCO FUNDING

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to and stand in unyielding opposition to the latest push by the administration and some in Congress to subvert U.S. law that prohibits the United States from funding any agency at the United Nations that admits a nonexistent state of Palestine to its membership.

When UNESCO opted to grant Palestine membership to its ranks in October of 2011, it did so knowing full well that U.S. law was obligated to cut off its funding. And they did it anyway.

However, now the Obama administration is making a full-out push to not only restore funding to UNESCO, which will cost the U.S. taxpayer nearly \$80 million a year—think of \$80 million of your hard-earned taxpayer dollars going to this U.N. institution. But it is not only \$80 million this year, it is to pay nearly \$250 million that we owe in arrears because the administration

decided to remain in UNESCO. We could have opted to pull out of that disgraceful body and not have any late fees, but now it is \$80 million to get in and \$250 million for the late fees.

Remember, this is the same U.N. that allows to sit on its human rights committee regimes such as Cuba, China, Venezuela, and Syria—yes, Syria, where the Assad regime has been responsible for the deaths of over 130,000 people during its tenure on the Human Rights Committee. These nations are human rights violators. They do a disservice to UNESCO, whose stated mission of peace through solidarity and the protection of basic freedoms is not being upheld. But what they really do well is push the strong anti-U.S. and anti-Israel agenda at UNESCO.

□ 1045

Let's be honest: that is why they remain in their positions.

Mr. Speaker, we must not equivocate. We must not mince words. We will not sit blithely by while some try to circumvent or undermine these laws to, once again, fund UNESCO. No.

Giving the administration the authority it seeks to fund UNESCO would not only set a dangerous precedent by showing those with an anti-Israel agenda at the U.N. that the U.S. does not have the courage of its convictions, nor the fortitude to enforce our own laws, but it would also give the green light to the rest of the bodies at the U.N. to follow UNESCO's lead, to admit Palestine, thereby granting it de facto recognition to a non-existent state.

This is a way for the PLO and its collaborators at the U.N. to use that body to gain statehood without having to first come to an agreement with Israel over the conflict.

A vote to fund UNESCO in this body is a vote to undermine the peace process and any hope of resolving this issue. To my colleagues, I would say that you must not fall for the latest bamboozle trick that UNESCO is pushing by playing on your soft spots.

What are they going to do?

UNESCO's going to come to some of us and promise to highlight the great buildings in our districts, the monuments in our districts, the cultural sites in our districts, and say they will designate them world heritage sites. We will bestow upon them official UNESCO designation of a heritage site.

Just how gullible does UNESCO think Members of Congress are?

I think we will soon see. They want us to ignore U.S. law so that we can restore funding to UNESCO so that UNESCO can give us some of our own U.S. taxpayer dollars back.

I implore my colleagues, please don't do this. Stand up for American principle. Stand up for U.S. law. Don't waste the hard-earned dollars of your constituents on an anti-American institution.

UNESCO knew what fate awaited it when it admitted Palestine, and now it must reap what it sowed, or it must re-

verse its decision. It is easy. The choice is, as it has always been, UNESCO's to make.

This is not just about principles. This is about convenience. UNESCO's betting that we only stand with Israel when it is convenient.

UNESCO turned its back on Israel and the peace process. All UNESCO wants is our cash, our constituents' cash, and then it will continue to pursue its anti-U.S., anti-Israel agenda.

Do you seriously think that your constituents want millions of their money to go to an agency at the corrupt U.N. that works against everything we try to do, to hurt our closest friend and ally, the democratic Jewish State of Israel?

I don't think so. We are better than that, Mr. Speaker. So I urge my colleagues to stand firm and do the right thing. No waiver, no flexibility, no change to U.S. law, no funding for UNESCO.

CLIMATE CHANGE DENIERS

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, the arctic vortex blast coincides with the return of Congress to Washington, D.C.; wind chills well below zero.

Now, no surprise, a number of my Republican colleagues who are dyed-in-the-wool climate change deniers, and some of the blathering idiots on talk shows said, Whoa, look at this. Arctic vortex proves that there is no climate change; there is no global warming. It is all a hoax.

Well, I would like to begin this new year with a little optimism, and hope Congress will take on big challenges, some of the biggest challenges of our time, including climate change, but the bizarre theories of the climate change deniers, and the excuses they will use, probably preclude that.

Now, given the overwhelming scientific consensus that climate change will spur more extreme weather events, yes, including record cold and arctic vortexes, with shifts in the jet stream, and droughts and a whole host of other things—we had about the driest year on record in the Western U.S. this year, in Oregon and California.

This is a serious challenge. Unfortunately, as I said earlier, this Congress, because of denial, is pretty much incapable of dealing with this challenge.

Luckily, we do have an alternative, and that is the President's Climate Action Plan, and the fact that the EPA has been found to have the authority by the Supreme Court of the United States to regulate carbon emissions as pollution. Following through on the President's Climate Action Plan is critical to show the rest of the world that the United States can again lead on this issue, and we are serious about it, and use that leverage to bring other countries into line.

Now, the EU and others are dealing with it, but there is total denial in