

Washington, it is a pleasure to say farewell to Doc.

I hope I will see you again very, very soon. Thank you, Doc.

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Thank you very much.

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

AN HONOR TO SERVE IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. VALADAO). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to rise today for, perhaps, my last time speaking as a Member of this institution.

I rise this evening, first and foremost, to pay a debt of gratitude to Georgia's 11th Congressional District and to the people there, who have graciously allowed me the privilege of serving them for these past 12 years.

Growing up modestly in Augusta, Georgia, I would never have dreamed that, someday, I would be standing where I am today, and I would not have had this opportunity if it weren't for my wonderful constituents in north-west Georgia. I may be biased, Mr. Speaker, but I think the people in my district are the nicest and the most hospitable in this country.

So, to them, on behalf of myself, my family, and my staff, I extend my deepest thanks for allowing us to serve you in this House of Representatives.

To my wife, Billie; my three daughters, Gannon, Phyllis, and Laura-Neill; and my son, Billy, I am forever grateful that you all have stayed by my side and that you have supported me throughout my public service. I wouldn't be where I am today without your sacrifices. To my family, a huge, heartfelt thanks.

Mr. Speaker, to my colleagues, it has been the honor of a lifetime to serve with all of you. The respect I have for each and every one transcends ideology and party line. I have made some of the greatest memories of my life with you, and I hope to stay connected with all of you in the years to come.

Of course, in order to be successful in this body, one must have a great staff. Thank you to each and every one of the staffers who has shown such great devotion in serving the people and in helping me to serve them in the 11th District of Georgia.

Thank you all for joining in my fight to protect the freedoms of the Georgians we serve and for working tirelessly for me for a better America.

I entered into Congress during a time of great unrest, not even 2 years after the 9/11 attacks in New York City. Since then, I have been honored to have been a part of this body as it has faced some of the largest challenges of the new millennia: the global war on

terror, the Great Recession, Medicare part D back in 2003, the stimulus response to the financial collapse, the Central American Free Trade Agreement, fighting for fiscal solvency during the fiscal cliff, and a litany of new challenges facing the health care industry due to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

It is my hope that as history examines my actions as a part of this body that the record will show that I always acted and voted the way I thought was in the best interests of the Georgians I served and, of course, this great Nation.

Now, I can't claim to be perfect. Far from it. Not every piece of legislation I championed passed, but no matter the outcome, I take comfort in knowing that the work that I have offered this body has spurred important debate that betters this institution as a whole and, in turn, our country.

□ 2045

It is that very spirit that led me to cofound the House GOP Doctors Caucus, a group of physicians and health care providers, medical professionals in Congress, people who had served in the medical professions prior to coming here, who utilize our collective first-hand medical expertise to develop patient-centered health reforms for all Americans.

Since the group's founding, we have tackled ObamaCare's threat to the doctor-patient relationship head-on and have played a key role in the fight for SGR reform. That fight continues.

Though it would be hard to let the Doctors Caucus go, to give up that leadership, to say good-bye to my colleagues, I extend my thanks to them, who joined with me as Members of that caucus. And I am confident that the group will continue its valuable work for many, many years to come.

I would also like to take a moment to thank my Democratic colleagues, people like my good friend from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL), who is sitting here in the Chamber. And I would also like to thank Representative GENE GREEN from Texas and many others for putting party lines aside and joining with me to lead on a number of fights, not the least of which is the threat of antibiotic-resistant "superbugs," a growing threat in hospitals all across the country. We worked so hard on that legislation, and we were so proud to see it pass—yes, in a bipartisan fashion—through the Energy and Commerce Committee under the leadership of Chairman UPTON; the vice chairman of the committee; the ranking member of the committee, HENRY WAXMAN; the chairman of the Health Subcommittee, JOE PITTS; and the ranking member of the Health Subcommittee and now ranking member of the overall committee, Mr. FRANK PALLONE. We worked together. And this is the way that exemplifies what public service should be all about, identifying a problem and then working together to solve it without regard to party lines.

But no matter how many problems we solve, there lay, of course, many hurdles ahead: immigration, continued reckless spending, these new, horrible threats in the Middle East, an ever-growing executive branch, and, of course, as I mentioned, health care.

As an OB/GYN physician, it truly worries me to be leaving Congress at a time when our health care industry has been tipped on its side—I think because of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. It is critical that this country find a more sustainable path to creating quality care and access to physicians. Government bureaucrats have no place between doctors and their patients.

But still, in light of these few frustrations, I have great confidence in this body. If history shows us anything, it is that despite the day-to-day angst of gridlock—and there is plenty of that to go around—this institution remains the greatest representative body the world has ever seen. The hurdles we face in this institution are always overcome, sometimes with more grace than others, and it will survive, as it always has. Our system of government is durable, it is resilient, and it is designed to withstand the test of time. It has been my greatest honor to have played even a small part in it.

But now it is time for my wife, Billie, and me to turn the page. We are looking forward to having the opportunity to check a few more boxes before we leave and then spend more time with all the grandchildren back home in Marietta.

So in short, Mr. Speaker, I guess you could say I am proud of the past, and I am excited for what the future may hold. But today, I am just happy to say that I am leaving. I feel confident that this body is better prepared for the future than it was when even I got here.

I want to thank, again, all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, Republicans and Democrats, and, of course, last but not least, the people of Georgia's 11th Congressional District for giving me this opportunity, this honor, and this privilege.

And I would be remiss, Mr. Speaker, if I closed without honoring our military heroes, the men and women and their families who have paid so much sacrifice for this great country.

I think over 40 have given their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan and have paid that last full measure.

I just want to say, I will never forget you, Patti and Jamie Saylor, and your great son, your hero Paul, who gave his life for our country.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity and the time tonight, and I yield back the balance of my time.

REAPPOINTMENT AS MEMBER TO NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON VITAL AND HEALTH STATISTICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's reappointment, pursuant to section

306(k) of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 242k), and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, of the following individual on the part of the House to the National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics for a term of 4 years:

Dr. Vickie M. Mays, Los Angeles, California.

DEPARTING MEMBERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCARELL) for 30 minutes.

Mr. PASCARELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to the gentleman from Georgia, before he leaves the floor, that I wish him the best of luck, Doc. And I wish the other Doc, the gentleman from Washington who has already left the floor, the best of luck. The gentleman from New Jersey, RUSH HOLT, who is going to speak after me, is leaving as well.

And I must say some things about all three of you, if I may, because you fit into these particular characteristics. The three of you are gentlemen. The three of you are real patriots. The three of you are civil in every respect. The three of you have a good sense of the Congress. The three of you have a great respect for the institution. And you will be missed.

God bless you. Godspeed. And good luck to you and your families.

THE AMERICAN ECONOMY

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the state of our Nation's economy. I have been waiting for this opportunity, Mr. Speaker. This is the time to do it.

Six years ago, when President Obama raised his hand on the steps of the Capitol of the United States of America and was sworn in as President, we were losing over 800,000 jobs every month, and these were mostly middle-income and lower-income Americans who were out of work. In the final 6 months of President Bush's administration, we lost 3.5 million jobs. By the time the recession was over, 8.8 million Americans were out of work. The ending of that recession technically was in June of 2009, but we did not start to create new jobs until March of 2010, and many of those jobs came from the census that was going on that year.

Our country's gross domestic product, GDP, in the fourth quarter of 2008—the last months of President Bush's administration—decreased by 8.9 percent. That is an unbelievable number. And President Bush was not solely responsible; we all shared in our financial demise. We have been digging ourselves out of this deep, deep hole ever since, with almost no help from our friends on the other side.

And I am glad my friend from Georgia mentioned that legislation that we passed in 2003, plan D. Because right after we lost that debate and lost that vote, we became part and parcel of that legislation which had been democrat-

ically passed in this House, although we didn't like it. We cooperated. We didn't try to undercut. We did not try to minimize. But the record will show that Democrats stood up, shook off their loss, and became part of what American democracy is all about. We cooperated.

Now, what have we had from the other side of the aisle? We have had no cooperation. We have had very little goodwill. We have had, simply speaking, no poetry whatsoever. In fact, just the opposite. We have seen the seeds sown in division, in fear, in disharmony.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which passed in February of 2009, our first response to the crisis, received zero votes from our friends on the other side of the aisle. We know now that this bill saved or created 3.6 million jobs in this country, although it was far too small to dig us out of the hole. But we were on our way.

The Affordable Care Act will allow a new generation of entrepreneurs to create a business, provide incentives for small business to offer health insurance, and attract qualified employees, even cut health care costs growth to unheard of levels, freeing up cash so that businesses can invest more and hire more workers—again, zero votes from our friends on the other side.

And then when you lose, you undermine as much as is humanly possible.

Where was the other side of the aisle when the unemployment insurance for long-term unemployed expired, cutting off 3.6 million Americans, including 350,000 veterans, at the end of September of 2014? When we had lost over 550,000 government jobs, dragging down our economy, our entire economic recovery, instead of working to keep people on the job, my friends on the other side of the aisle were pushing more and more disastrous, job-killing budget cuts.

And, Mr. Speaker, let me say this: The record will bear me out. We now have the lowest number of Federal employees, the lowest amount of employees, since 1966. So when our friends on the other side talk about Big Government, they ought to know about it since they created it. We have had the lowest amount of Federal workers. And for the last 5 or 6 years, many of those workers—forget about us—have not even gotten a cost of living increase.

So you can understand very clearly why the American people are frustrated with the pace of our recovery. And in many ways, I share their frustration. It has taken far too long, and the fruits of the recovery have not been equally distributed.

During the recovery, incomes have been flat for the vast majority of Americans while the folks at the top of the income scale are doing better than ever. No one should try to undermine anybody making a living and a good living, but everybody should be part of making sure that there are shared

fruits on the line and everybody gets a chance and an opportunity.

The stock market is up over 165 percent since the low it hit at the depths of the recession. While stocks have fully recovered and continue to set record highs, the job market has lagged behind, not recovering all the jobs lost in the recession until just 6 months ago, 5 years after the recession officially ended.

In my home State of New Jersey, total employment is still well below where we were at the start of the recession. There are over 130,000 fewer jobs in New Jersey than in December of 2007. Our unemployment rate is nearly a full point higher than the national average. Take heed what happens to your own State, never mind what happens in other States.

Wages have also been stagnant, stuck at around 2 percent for the last few years. If wage growth had been a more robust 4 percent—enough to factor in inflation and growth in productivity—the average worker would be making more than \$3 more per hour today than they are. That is a fact. It is undeniable.

□ 2100

It is undeniable. This is because, for example, during the first 3 years since the end of the recession, the top 1 percent of Americans captured 95 percent of the entire country's income gains. This wage stagnation didn't just start with the recession.

Incomes for the middle class had been stagnant for the past 15 years, and if you adjust for inflation, middle class wages are lower than they were in 1989. That is a fact. There are many reasons for the middle class to feel like they are left out, like the recovery has left them behind. It is because the entire economy is leaving them behind.

This year, it seems like we may have finally begun to turn that corner, and our economic recovery is still and really accelerating. Last week, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the economy created 321,000 jobs.

That makes for 57 straight months of job growth, the longest streak of consecutive months of job creation on record for a total of over 10.9 million new jobs. For the last 10 of these months, we have created over 200,000 jobs per month. That is the first time we have had a streak of that with robust job creation since the 1990s.

The 321,000 jobs created in November brings the total number of jobs created just this year to 2.65 million jobs, so with 1 month to go, we have already created more jobs—get this—than any year since the 1990s. Now, those are some of the statistics about the job numbers you might read in USA Today.

Manufacturing is the linchpin of our economy, adding 28,000 good-paying jobs just last month for a total nearly of three-quarters of a million new jobs. Wages, as I mentioned, have been stagnant. You will see a nice monthly gain of 0.4 percent.