

Instead of focusing on the issues that the American people want addressed—we are having the same discussion to repeal the Affordable Care Act in efforts of my colleagues to repeal, obstruct and undermine this law. What is even more frustrating is that while there is so much energy in trying to repeal the Affordable Care Act, there has been no plan or suggestions posed on how to replace it.

I want to once again highlight the benefits of the Affordable Care Act so we can once in for all end the attempts to try and repeal this law that benefits so many Americans. Because of the Affordable Care Act, Americans are already seeing lower costs, better coverage, and patient protections that Republicans want to repeal:

13 million Americans benefited from \$1.1 billion in rebates sent to them from their health insurance companies last year.

105 million Americans have access to free preventive services, including 71 million Americans in private plans and 34 million seniors on Medicare.

Millions of women began receiving free coverage for comprehensive women's preventive services in August 2012.

100 million Americans no longer have a lifetime limit on healthcare coverage.

Nearly 17 million children with pre-existing conditions can no longer be denied coverage by insurers.

6.6 million young-adults up to age 26 have health insurance through their parents' plan, half of whom would be uninsured without this coverage.

6.3 million Seniors in the 'donut hole' have already saved \$6.1 billion on their prescription drugs.

3.2 million Seniors have access to free annual wellness visits under Medicare, and

360,000 small employers have already taken advantage of the Small Business Health Care Tax Credit to provide health insurance to 2 million workers.

Because of the Affordable Care Act 3.8 million people in Texas—including 2.2 million seniors on Medicare now receive preventative care services. Over 7 million Texans no longer have to fear lifetime limits on their healthcare insurance. Texas parents of 300,731 young adults can sleep easier at night knowing that their children can remain on their health insurance until age 26.

The protection provided by this law is a guarantee to 5 million Texas residents that their insurance companies will spend 80 percent of their premium dollars on healthcare, or customers will get a rebate from their insurance company.

In my state, there are 4,029 people who had no insurance because of pre-existing conditions, but today the Affordable Care Act has provided them with access to coverage. The Affordable Care Act means that many Texans are free of worry about having access to healthcare insurance.

However, the list of benefits from the Affordable Care Act is not completed. In 2014, the Affordable Care Act's final provisions will become available to our citizens. Insurance companies will be banned from: discriminating against anyone with a pre-existing condition, charging higher rates based on gender or health status, enforcing lifetime dollar limits, enforcing annual dollar limits on health benefits.

In 2014, access to affordable healthcare for the self employed or those who decide to pur-

chase their own coverage will be easier because of Affordable Insurance Exchanges. There will be a one stop marketplace where consumers can do what Federal employees have done for decades—purchase insurance at reasonable rates from an insurer of their choice. This will assure that health care consumers can get the care that they need from the medical professionals they trust.

This Congress has work that needs to be done, and it has work that should be taken up to restore workers, their families and communities to sound economic health, not play partisan political games.

I urge my Colleagues to put partisan politics aside and join me in voting no on the passage of this bill.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

SPEECH OF

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 2, 2015

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, first, let me thank Congressman DONALD PAYNE, Jr. and Congresswoman ROBIN KELLY for hosting this evening's Special Order. I appreciate your leadership in organizing this important discussion.

Today we ask: where we were, where we are, and where we are headed. This year, we celebrate 50 years from the March in Selma. 50 years from the signing of the pivotal Voting Rights Act. Over that last 50 years, much has changed. But the work remains unfinished.

Fifty years ago, civil rights leaders and concerned citizens marched in Selma for freedom. The freedom to vote, to assemble, to petition their government—the Constitutional protections enshrined in our nation's Constitution.

It was a fight to end legal, Jim Crow segregation in the South that actively and systematically suppressed African Americans. But it was also a fight to protect all Americans—as Dr. King wrote in his famous letter from the Birmingham Jail: "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

We are still fighting to end injustice in our nation—we are fighting for economic justice and justice under the law.

Nearly 50 years ago, Dr. King outlined the two Americas that still exist today.

In a speech on April 14th, 1967 at Stanford University, Dr. King explained: "there are literally two Americas. One America is beautiful for situation. And, in a sense, this America is overflowing with the milk of prosperity and the honey of opportunity. . . . tragically and unfortunately, there is another America. This other America has a daily ugliness about it that constantly transforms the ebullience of hope into the fatigue of despair."

Ladies and gentlemen—tragically, there are still two Americas.

Systemic and institutional disparities and inequality are endemic at every level of our society—a legacy born in the suffering of the Middle Passage, nurtured through slavery and preserved with Jim Crow.

Today, we see this legacy in African American unemployment that is more than twice the unemployment rate of whites.

We see it in poverty rates for African Americans that are nearly three times the rate of white Americans.

We see it in the faces of the 1 in 3 black men who will have spent some time of their life in jail.

Mr. Speaker—In many ways, we are still living in two Americas. One of poverty, unemployment and injustice.

Mr. Speaker—too many are being left behind.

Sadly, Congressional leadership has decided to pursue partisan gridlock instead of acting for the millions of struggling Americans.

Tragically, many of the rights we fought for 50 years ago we are still fighting today. Congress has reauthorized the Voting Rights Act four times, with large bipartisan support. However, there has been no Congressional action since the Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act. Not one hearing, not one vote and the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee has made clear, on this floor, that he has no intentions of taking up this matter.

Likewise, the deaths of Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Oscar Grant—one of my constituents—and many others illustrate that there are still two Americas.

Recent events forced us to ask ourselves do Black lives matter? Yes—black lives matter. Brown lives matter. White lives matter—all lives matter.

Our institutions must reflect this core value that all lives matters. We in Congress have a duty to get serious about reforming our broken criminal justice system. We need to repeal unfair sentencing laws, increase police force diversity, improve racial sensitivity training, end the school-to-prison pipeline and work to re-integrate ex-offenders back into society.

The Black Lives Matter movement parallels the Civil Rights Movement's call to action, a movement to that calls us to end economic despair, drives out hate and fear and embrace love, and unseats the unjust status quo.

While Americans from all walks of life continue to protest and demand for change, Congress must hear their call and work to enact real change.

Like Congress acted 50 years ago after Selma, we were sent to Washington to address the issues facing our nation—let's start working on the structural and racial biases that pervades and poisons our institutions.

That is why I am a proud cosponsor of the Grand Jury Reform Act, which authorizes an appointment of a special prosecutor to conduct an investigation and present the results to a judge in a probable cause hearing, open to the public, whenever a police officer kills an individual while acting in the line of duty.

Mr. Speaker—We must pass this bill.

I have also introduced the Half in Ten Act to create a national strategy to cut the poverty rate in half over the next decade and lift 22 million Americans into the middle class.

Mr. Speaker—We must also pass this bill.

As a nation, we have made progress against racism and injustice. But we are backsliding.

We cannot lose the prize that our forefathers and mothers fought, bled and died to obtain and preserve. The soul of our nation is at stake.

Today, we carry the banner of Dr. King, Rosa Parks, and Medgar Evers. We have a duty to continue the fight for freedom, equality and justice.

This means Congress working together—Republican and Democrat—to pass important legislation to address unemployment and poverty and protect the voting rights of all.

The American dream of equality, freedom, liberty, justice and life must be more than just words. It must be a promise to all Americans, regardless of race, gender, place of birth, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity, nationality or religion.

Together, we can continue the unfinished work of creating a more perfect union.

HONORING LOGAN RODGERS

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 5, 2015

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Logan Rodgers. Logan is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 708, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Logan has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Logan has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Logan has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Logan Rodgers for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. EVAN H. JENKINS

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 5, 2015

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, on roll call no. 51, due to inclement weather, I was unable to vote on H.R. 361, Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act. Had I been present, I would have voted Yea.

TRIBUTE TO MARJORIE ANN SHARP

HON. LUKE MESSER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 5, 2015

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life of Marjorie Ann Sharp, a woman of great faith and an instrumental leader in Indiana's Wayne County Council.

Marjorie was a loving and devoted wife to her husband of 62 years, Karl. Together, they were the proud parents of three children, five grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. They were also my friends. As active members of the Central United Methodist Church, Marjorie and her family valued their faith and were diligent leaders within the Richmond community. She served for an impressive 16 years on the Wayne County Council and, furthermore, became the first female to serve as President of the County Council.

Today, it is my privilege to honor the life of Marjorie Ann Sharp. My thoughts and prayers

go out to Marjorie's family during this difficult time. May God comfort those close to her with His peace and strength.

INTRODUCTION OF THE AWARE ACT

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 5, 2015

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today, along with my colleague and co-chair of the Congressional Animal Protection Caucus, MIKE FITZPATRICK, I am pleased to introduce the Animal Welfare in Agricultural Research Endeavors, or AWARE Act. This bill would ensure that farm animals used in agricultural research at federal research facilities are included in the definition of "animal" under the Animal Welfare Act.

A January 20, 2015 front page article in the New York Times, "U.S. Research Lab Lets Livestock Suffer in Quest for Profit: Animal Welfare at Risk in Experiments for Meat Industry," examined horrendous abuses at the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center in Clay Center, Nebraska. In the last 30 years, over half a million animals have been housed at the center. The center's experiments have included experiments to increase the number of twin births in cows and expand the litter size of pigs, without consideration of animal health impacts, and trying to breed "easy care" lambs that are born in open fields without human assistance—all with horrifying, and often unsuccessful results.

At least 6,500 animals are known to have starved to death at this facility alone. Unknown numbers have died from negligence such as easily treatable infections, exposure to bad weather, or attacks by predators. In just the last 10 years, this single center has cost nearly \$200 million with taxpayers footing the bill for this shocking abuse of animals.

Appallingly, these animals are not currently protected under federal law. While the Animal Welfare Act ensures that certain minimum standards of humane care are required for federal and private research facilities, there is an exemption for farm animals "used or intended for use for improving animal nutrition, breeding, management, or production efficiency, or for improving the quality of food or fiber"—from those basic protections. As a result, federal facilities like the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center don't have to obey the Animal Welfare Act.

This is why we are introducing the AWARE Act, which would close this loophole at federal research facilities. It is time that we step up to stop this horrible misuse of taxpayer funds. There is no reason that USDA agricultural research facilities experimenting on farm animals should not be held to the same standard as federal research facilities that conduct life-saving disease research with the same kinds of animals.

This is a small step that this Congress can take quickly to show that we respond to animal abuse and that the federal government will lead by example.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 5, 2015

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$18,098,502,229,899.75. We've added \$7,471,625,180,986.67 to our debt in 6 years. This is over \$7.4 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

CELEBRATING THE 70TH BIRTHDAY OF JAMES GOODE

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 5, 2015

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the seventieth birthday of one of my distinguished and active constituents, James Goode of Farmers Branch, Texas.

James has been a strong and hardworking member of this community for many decades. He has been an active role model and his eagerness to be involved has resonated throughout the area. He is Chairman of the Board of the Farmers Branch Chamber of Commerce, President of Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District Board of Trustees, and is active in his church are just a few examples of his involvement among his peers. James is someone who sets out and makes a positive difference in everyone's life around him.

James also served our country in the Navy for four years and earned his B.S. in electrical engineering from the University of Texas-Arlington before settling down in Farmers Branch. His political involvement and strong engagement in the community provides a commendable example to others in the 24th district. As president of the school board, he exercises positive influence over the local education system and his reliable leadership style has helped many and will help the coming generations of children learn and excel to the best of their ability.

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to recognize the seventieth birthday of one of my most engaged constituents, Mr. James Goode. I ask all of my distinguished colleagues to join me in celebrating this milestone in his remarkable life.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 2, 2015

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey, Congressman DONALD PAYNE, Jr., and the gentlewoman from Illinois, Congresswoman ROBIN