□ 1015

There has been a brilliant and exhaustive report by the Institute of Medicine that deals with the problems and concerns and how we can do better. Dr. Atul Gawande's bestselling book, ''Being Mortal,'' makes it clear that there are crying needs and simple, commonsense compassionate solutions.

There is a revolution taking place in health care today. What if, as part of that revolution, Congress started the new year with our bipartisan legislation, the Personalize Your Care Act, to make sure those families understand their choices, that their choices are known, and—most important—their choices are respected?

We had dozens of cosponsors and broad support across the medical establishment and the community of faith. Maybe we can pick up where we left off and have this legislation bring us together to protect our families and start the year on a united front, giving families the protection they want for the care they need.

There is no reason we in Congress need to spin our wheels and shout at and past each other. Mr. Speaker, I could have made this same presentation not about the water and sanitation, but about how this Congress came together in the final hours to help save the lives of Afghans and Iraqis who are now at risk from the tender mercies of the Taliban and al Qaeda because they helped Americans as guides and interpreters when we needed them.

These are some of my examples of bipartisan cooperation that are important which we have done in the past. I would invite my colleagues to share their agenda of bipartisan, low or no-cost legislation that allows us to work together.

It is not too late to start the year and this Congress right.

THE SAVE AMERICAN WORKERS ACT

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

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 30, the Save American Workers Act, and to urge all of my colleagues to join me in voting ''yes'' on this important initiative.

I have heard from many people across northern Michigan—from working moms and dads and small business owners to county government—that the President's health care law is stifling economic growth, job creation, and hours of work.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most burdensome and baffling regulations imposed by the President's health care law was the reclassification of what constitutes a full-time employee.

The Save American Workers Act will get rid of this rule, helping employees in Michigan and around the country create more opportunities in our area. This simple and commonsense fix will be a good first step towards restoring the true definition of full-time employment and increasing jobs in northern Michigan.

I have joined with 147 of my colleagues—more than one-third of the entire House—in being an original cosponsor of this legislation. I am happy that this is one of the first bills that the House of Representatives will pass.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

THE KEYSTONE PIPELINE

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

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, a new Congress, but the sights are familiar: the same rhetoric with no regard for the truth.

Ahead of another ill-advised vote to approve the Keystone pipeline, the same myths are being spread pitting environmental protection against job creation.

Winston Churchill once said:

The truth is incontrovertible. Malice may attack it, ignorance may deride it, but in the end, there it is.

Let us separate myths from reality. It is time to decide: truth or scare. Approval of the Keystone pipeline will have very little impact in the way of job creation but a detrimental impact on the environment and hinder our promise of a clean energy future. That is the truth.

My question is: Why are we ignoring these facts and voting once again to approve the Keystone pipeline, which would carry one of the dirtiest energy sources on the planet? Perhaps it has something to do with the many myths associated with this project. Pipeline proponents are quick to point to the creation of jobs as the primary reason for the project's approval; however, the facts don't match up.

According to the only independent analysis by Cornell University's Global Labor Institute, these claims are not accurate. TransCanada's job claims are complete fabrications. The Cornell report concludes that Keystone will not be a major source of jobs, nor will it play any substantial role at all in putting Americans back to work.

The State Department says Keystone would only create 35 permanent jobs and 1,950 construction jobs for 2 years. Most of those jobs created by this project will be nonlocal and temporary.

In reality, we can and should be creating jobs by improving our existing infrastructure and investing in clean energy, education, and research. In fact, Keystone would make it much harder for the United States to invest in clean energy jobs and address global climate change. Our best bet at a clean energy economy lies far, far away from tar sands. That is the truth.

Proponents of the pipeline claim that Keystone will bring down gas prices for Americans, but in reality, prices at Midwestern pumps could actually increase. According to its own documents, TransCanada expects the pipeline to increase gas prices in the Midwest up to 15 cents per gallon.

Currently, a surplus of gas in the region means that our prices stay stable. If the pipeline is built, oil companies will be able to send their product to the gulf coast for export, which will reduce the surplus and drive up costs for Midwestern consumers. That is the truth.

On top of all this, let's not forget TransCanada is the same company that operates the existing Keystone pipeline which spilled a dozen times in the first year of operation. The twelfth spill released 21,000 gallons of oil in North Dakota, contaminating the soil and water.

Across the country, about 3.2 million gallons of oil spill from pipelines every year. These spills pose a great threat to American drinking water, especially when you consider the proposed project route would cross 1,073 surface water bodies and affect 383 acres of wetlands.

Most Americans understand that oil spills in the past have had severe environmental impacts, but any Keystone spill would be truly catastrophic. That is the truth.

In the end, Keystone brings a whole lot of environmental risk and very little reward. It is time we stopped perpetuating the myths. It is time we heed the warnings. It is time we decide: truth or scare.

MOBILE COOPER RIVERSIDE PARK

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

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, in Mobile's Cooper Riverside Park, there stands a statue of Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville, the French founder of Mobile, a statue which is identical to another statue located in Havana, Cuba.

This statue is just one example of the robust ties between the city of Mobile, located in my Congressional district, and Cuba. These ties go all the way back to Spanish colonization in the 18th century.

It is safe to say that I represent a district that stands to benefit from improved relationships with Cuba. In fact, the Port of Mobile is a straight shot to Cuba and could be an important economic hub, just as it was going back to the 18th century.

Under the right circumstances, I would gladly support lifting the trade embargo with Cuba and improving diplomatic relations. Unfortunately, now is not that time. The economic benefits should not come at the cost of enabling a ruthless regime that is unwilling to change.

Once again, the President seems to be more interested in a publicity stunt than in a substantive solution. The White House will tell you that this action is no different from previous efforts to improve relations with other

communist countries like Vietnam or China.

Here is the problem with that premise. In each of those cases, the President engaged with Congress in a serious conversation and debate about the best path forward. A plan was developed, serious concessions were agreed to, and each nation mutually benefited from these meaningful actions.

Unfortunately, in the case of Cuba, President Obama has again decided to cut Congress out of the process and act alone with no real plan to accomplish his stated goal. This approach is the wrong way for our government to operate, and it has once again resulted in a bad deal.

Columnist Charles Krauthammer put it best when he said:

Do you know how to achieve a breakthrough in tough negotiations? Give everything away.

Mr. Speaker, I can't help but ask what reforms Cuba will make as a result of this deal. Let's not forget that this is the same Cuba, under the same regime, who during the cold war had nuclear missiles on their soil aimed at the United States of America.

This is the same Cuba that refuses to let the church operate freely. This is the same Cuba that worked with Venezuela and North Korea against the interests of the United States. This is the same Cuba that has been accused again and again of egregious human rights violations. Nothing has changed in those areas at all, and the Castro brothers are still in power.

Now, there is a path forward for improved diplomatic relations and ending the trade embargo. The Castro regime must go. Political activity must be legalized. Public commitments to free and fair elections must be made. An independent judiciary must be established. Rights to free speech and freedom of the press must be guaranteed.

Cuba must renounce the policy of being a staging area against the United States. Political prisoners must be freed, and the Cuban citizens must be treated with respect and dignity and be provided with the basic freedoms we often take for granted here in the U.S.

Under those conditions and with a President willing to work with Congress, the embargo could be lifted and progress could truly begin.

Mr. Speaker, I find myself once again coming to this floor to implore President Obama to abandon his ill-conceived, independent executive action and, instead, come to the Capitol, work with this Congress, share ideas, and collaborate; and together, we can make a real, positive impact on behalf of the American people.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH FUNDING

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call the Congress' attention to what I think is our most important issue we face as a Congress and as a people, and that is preserving America's greatest asset, which is the health and lives of our citizens.

In doing so, I request, as I have done on many occasions, that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle join me in adequately funding our Nation's other department of defense—coequally important—the National Institutes of Health.

Yes, the Department of Defense is important, and we fund it more than adequately, more than they even ask for, and it protects us from ISIS and others that caused the great tragedy in Paris and has caused terror and havoc in Great Britain, Australia, and Canada and that I am sure will come to our shores sooner than we expect, but the National Institutes of Health protects us from disease, disease that threatens every American and every American's loved one.

The sequestration has cut billions from NIH's budget, and that is our country's foremost medical research center. It has helped billions of people across the country and across the world who suffer from heart disease, cancer, HIV/AIDS, diabetes, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, you name it, but we have inadequately funded the NIH.

It has not kept up with the level of inflation over the last decade. Based on that level of inflation, the funding we have given the NIH has resulted in a 10 percent diminution in funding on the purchasing power of the National Institutes of Health.

The likelihood of any one of us dying from a terrorist attack or from some weapon fired from North Korea or Russia or Iran is very slim, but the odds of us suffering from the diseases which I have mentioned previously is likely in our loved ones. We need to fight those diseases. We can do it, and we can successfully come up with treatments and cures if we fund the National Institutes of Health.

Supporting the NIH used to be a bipartisan commitment, especially seeing that every dollar invested results in about $2.21 in economic growth. I hope that this new American Congress will see that and that my Republican colleagues will agree with me that we need to put a focus on our individual capital, the personal capital of people, their health and their well-being.

I talked to Representative MARINO recently, and he is going to join me in founding an NIH caucus. I think there is nothing more important. In the past, many times, when I have brought up funding for the NIH, friends on the other side have said: ''Well, we will have to pay for it. If we put more money in it, then our children and grandchildren will be paying for the debt for years to come.''

That may be true, but nevertheless, the children and the grandchildren will be receiving the benefits of the treatments and cures more likely than any of us will, for research takes a long time.

We also need to change our course in stem cell research. We have had problems with allowing scientists to use this opportunity to come through with great medical breakthroughs.

Federal funding is currently prohibited by the 1996 Dickey amendment to the appropriations bill that funds the NIH, but researchers around the world have dived headfirst into the field using stem cells and producing incredible findings and progress.

In 2010, a gentleman named Darek Fidyka, a Polish man, was stabbed multiple times in a knife attack, and he was paralyzed from the chest down, but thanks to stem cell research in Poland, in collaboration with researchers and doctors there and in the United Kingdom, Darek can now walk again with the help of a walker.

Dr. Geoff Raisman, the chair of neurological regeneration at University College London's Institute of Neurology called this development—and I agree with him—''more impressive than man walking on the Moon.''

□ 1030

We allowed a man who couldn't walk, couldn't stand to walk, and more will come from that research on stem cells and other scientific research. Darek otherwise would have been paralyzed for life, and now he is walking again thanks to private investment in stem cell research, but the government needs to participate.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for this Congress to adequately fund the National Institutes of Health, recognize its importance to our constituents who are important to us, and whose lives and health are the most important things that we can provide for them. It is time this country no longer turns a blind eye to research, and to stem cell research in particular. I urge my colleagues to seize the opportunities offered by this new Congress and join me in the efforts to fund the National Institutes of Health and to join the National Institutes of Health Caucus.

FIXING THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

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

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, it is an exciting honor to address the people's House for the first time.

The 114th Congress carries with it a great opportunity to address the challenges our Nation faces. One priority of the new American Congress is fixing our broken health care system. We have all heard from small businesses and companies who have been forced to lay off workers due to the President's health care law, consequently slowing innovation that drives our Nation and slowing the pace at which that innovation can improve public health outcomes for all Americans.

This week I am proud to cosponsor H.R. 160 that will repeal the medical