

And we all know the hundreds of small businesses that supply them, machine shops like DJ Engineering and McGinty Machine, that hire hundreds of people in good-paying jobs that are dependent on the capacity for south central Kansas to ship their products around the world, companies like Rubbermaid and Case New Holland that makes farm equipment and Coleman that makes camping goods.

This doesn't begin to mention all the petroleum products that move out of Kansas. And, of course, we sell lots of agricultural products as well. Kansas is the top exporter of wheat, with over \$1.5 billion per year. It ranks second in the export of meat products and third in cattle.

International trade is incredibly important to the people of south central Kansas. These aren't just numbers. These are about real, hard-working Kansans and good-paying jobs.

We need to make sure, here in Congress, that we provide outlines for our President to go negotiate deals with both Europe and Asia such that companies like Excel that makes lawn mowing equipment in Hesston, Kansas, can continue to grow. It is their objective to double over the next 5 years. They cannot do so without the capacity to sell their products into Europe and to Asia.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is much controversy about some pieces of trade promotion authority in some of the trade agreements. I have read the document as it currently stands. I can assure everyone who is listening today that this Congress will retain its full authority to approve every agreement that is entered into to make sure that it is, in fact, in the best interests of reducing taxes, reducing tariffs, and reducing regulatory barriers so that Americans and Kansans can sell their products all across the globe.

Sometimes the word "trade" gets bandied about, but what it really means is the capacity for innovation, creativity, the rule of law, and competitiveness to triumph around the world. Those are the hallmarks of the people of south central Kansas. If we get these trade agreements right, we can enhance the lives of so many folks all across the Fourth District of Kansas.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in supporting passage of trade promotion authority when it comes before the House for a full vote. It is about trade, which is about jobs, which is so important for the American people.

CELEBRATING THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY'S WATTS BAR NUCLEAR FACILITY

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

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, on June 1, 1796, Tennessee became the 16th

member of these United States. For some 200 years, Tennessee has been a part of the innovative vanguard that makes this country great, whether it be through culture, science, or even our fabulous barbecue.

Last week, I had the opportunity to tour the latest energy innovation the State of Tennessee has to offer—the Tennessee Valley Authority's Watts Bar Nuclear facility. With the construction of Watts Bar Unit 2 now approximately 98 percent complete, TVA will soon mark the 21st century's first new American nuclear unit to come online. And I am so pleased, Mr. Speaker, that today The Hill newspaper has an article about this very facility.

The project is indeed to be celebrated. It is a model of safety and quality. The dedicated TVA employees at Watts Bar have put in a million hours of work without a lost-time accident. At the same time, they have maintained a quality acceptance rate above 97 percent. That also should be celebrated. Together with Watts Bar Unit 1, the complete facility will be able to power 1.3 million homes in the Tennessee Valley.

Mr. Speaker, America must pursue an all-of-the-above energy policy that includes nuclear. Nuclear is a clean, responsible option and one that strengthens our Nation's energy security grid. Unfortunately, though, the EPA, the Obama administration, has proposed sweeping regulations that wage a war on coal while also dismissing the benefits and the power of nuclear energy.

Under the EPA's Clean Power Plan, Tennessee is actually penalized for taking a leading role in providing the region and the country with a clean and reliable source of energy. When drafting the Clean Power Plan, the EPA counted the Watts Bar Unit 2 as being completed and operating at 90 percent efficiency.

□ 1030

It is not online yet, it is not complete, and it is not yet helping to power homes and businesses.

As a result, Tennessee's emission targets under this rule are more difficult to reach because the State is not able to count the emission reductions from this cleaner plant towards its required cuts.

Rather than recognizing TVA's forward-looking work to construct Watts Bar 2, EPA unfairly, and significantly, increased the emission reduction rate for Tennessee.

I was sent to Congress to ensure that the needs of my constituents are represented here in Washington. As the vice chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, I will continue my efforts to stop the EPA from its overreach and to stop them from implementing this administration's special interest agenda, which has no regard for the economic impact or energy needs of the people of Tennessee.

Mr. Speaker, this is important, and I want to thank the TVA team for show-

ing me the Watts Bar facility and for allowing me to have a remarkable visit, and I encourage them in their continued good work.

SCHOOL MILK NUTRITION ACT OF 2015

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I recently teamed up with Congressman JOE COURTNEY of Connecticut to introduce H.R. 2407, the bipartisan School Milk Nutrition Act of 2015.

Between 2012 and 2014, schools across the country served 187 million fewer pints of milk, despite an increase in public school enrollment. Mr. Speaker, this is an alarming statistic considering milk is the number one source of nine essential nutrients in young Americans' diets and provides many significant health benefits.

The School Milk Nutrition Act, which has the strong support of the International Dairy Foods Association and the National Milk Producers Federation, seeks to reverse the decline of milk consumption in schools throughout Pennsylvania and across the country.

To help achieve this goal, the bill would reaffirm the requirement that milk is offered with each meal and also give schools the option of offering low-fat flavored milk, rather than only fat free.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to get behind this legislation and become a cosponsor of the School Milk Nutrition Act of 2015.

THE VETERANS E-HEALTH AND TELEMEDICINE SUPPORT ACT OF 2015

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, with this past week being celebrated and remembering Memorial Day—Memorial Day having just passed—it is important that we continue to remember and honor our fallen soldiers and the new generation of heroes who equally deserve our respect, our gratitude, and the promise of continued support.

This is why I recently joined with New York Congressman CHARLES RANGEL to introduce H.R. 2516, the Veterans E-Health and Telemedicine Support Act of 2015.

This bipartisan legislation would allow Veterans Affairs health professionals, including contractors, to practice telemedicine across State borders if they are qualified and practice within the scope of their authorized Federal duties.

Currently, overly cumbersome location requirements can make it difficult for veterans, especially those struggling with mental health issues, to get the help they need and deserve.

Mr. Speaker, under current law, the VA can only waive the State license requirement for treatment if both the physician and the patient are located in a federally owned facility.

The Veterans E-Health and Telemedicine Support Act of 2015 removes these barriers and allows the VA to provide treatment through physicians free of this restriction. Veterans will no longer be required to travel to a VA facility but, rather, can receive telemedicine treatment from anywhere, including their home or a community center.

Mr. Speaker, these brave men and women put so much on the line each and every day in service to our country that when they return home it is our shared duty to be there for these heroes by making lifesaving resources readily available.

This legislation will eliminate the multiple layers of bureaucracy, allowing our veterans to have greater access to mental and behavioral health services, especially in rural areas.

I rise today and ask my colleagues in both parties to get behind this bipartisan, commonsense legislation.

Mr. Speaker, sadly, 22 veterans commit suicide every day. Let's end that crisis.

OBAMACARE RATE HIKES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOONEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, it has now been more than 5 years since President Obama signed his landmark achievement, which he called the Affordable Care Act, into law. At that time, the President and the Democrats in Congress promised that their massive Federal takeover of our healthcare system would lower costs on American families. Affordability was its central selling point.

But 5 years later, they must face the facts. Their law, which they forced on the American people, is a failure.

According to yesterday's much-anticipated Congressional Budget Office reports—an independent agency—insurance premiums are expected to increase even more significantly next year than they did this year.

One insurer in New Mexico, Blue Cross and Blue Shield, called for a 50 percent increase in premiums. And New Mexico is just the tip of the iceberg. Tennessee is also seeking an increase of 30 percent.

The average West Virginia family—the State I am blessed to represent—pays about the same as the residents in the State of New York, which is \$17,105 a year on their health insurance. That is \$271 above the national average.

We cannot pretend that the Affordable Care Act is anywhere close to “affordable.” ObamaCare adds taxes, regulations, and unfunded mandates onto the American consumers. The limited choice in health insurance plans is harming families and their budgets.

In my district in West Virginia, there is only one insurance provider through the exchange. And this one plan is asking for a rate increase as high as 21.6 percent.

President Obama has routinely and blatantly forced his failed policies on the American people. According, again, to the independent Congressional Budget Office report of February 4, 2014, ObamaCare has killed 2.5 million jobs a year.

Who are these 2.5 million Americans who have lost their jobs thanks to ObamaCare? They are disproportionately low-wage workers. The people who are hurt the most by ObamaCare are the same ones who ObamaCare was supposed to help. What we really should call it is the “Non-Affordable Care Act.”

West Virginians who get their healthcare insurance through their work are paying some of the highest rates in the United States for premiums and deductibles, according to a report from The Commonwealth Fund. The 33,421 West Virginians who are currently enrolled in ObamaCare cannot afford to have their rates hiked yet again.

Many Americans are left wondering how much more will we have to pay each year because of the Non-Affordable Care Act. To make matters worse, the Non-Affordable Care Act has added \$1 trillion in tax increases. This is money taken out of the pockets of hard-working American families.

The top Democrat leader here in Congress famously said on March 10, 2010: “We have to pass the Affordable Care Act to find out what's in it.” You should know what it is before you vote on it—come on. Well, it has been 5 years since the bill was shoved through Congress, and the American people deserve better.

We must halt ObamaCare's takeover of the U.S. healthcare system and pass commonsense reforms that lower costs for hard-working families and expand access to health care. The State of West Virginia and the Nation need lower costs and personal control over healthcare decisions, not more Federal Government intervention.

The budget that was recently passed by the House and the Senate repealed ObamaCare—including all of its taxes, regulations, and mandates—and ObamaCare's outrageous requirement that the taking of unborn human lives be covered as so-called “health care.”

Republican healthcare plans pave the way for patient-centered healthcare solutions. We need to focus on reform that will help reconnect doctors and patients and give patients better care through more options.

The goal of patient-centered healthcare reform is to empower the patients. Republicans in Congress have multiple proposals to address the healthcare issue. Republicans propose increasing competition and transparency in the health insurance market and stopping frivolous lawsuits against doctors and hospitals.

Americans should not be forced to buy into something that simply doesn't work. The Non-Affordable Care Act does not work. The estimated premium

increases that were announced yesterday are yet another example of the failings of this bill and this President.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 40 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HARDY) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Dear God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

There are many important issues facing our Nation—concerns about immigration, our national security, our personal privacy, the economy, and levels of unemployment. Bless abundantly the Members of this people's House.

Help them to see new ways to productive service, fresh approaches to understanding each other, especially those across the aisle, and renewed commitment to solving the problems facing our Nation.

May they, and may we all, be transformed by Your grace and better reflect the sense of wonder, even joy, at the opportunities to serve that are ever before us.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr.