

There are 2.7 million seniors in America who are blind. How many of them would be able to see today if they had received simple annual eye exams as part of their Medicare coverage?

Medicare is a promise that we make to ourselves—the young to the old, one generation to the next. The promise is that, after you reach your 65th birthday, your medical needs will be met. To keep that promise, our seniors have paid into the system, in some cases for a half a century, before they receive a single earned benefit. They deserve the best care we can provide for them.

This week, to honor the 50th anniversary of this lifesaving program we call Medicare, I am introducing the Seniors Have Eyes, Ears, and Teeth Act. This bill will amend title XVIII—the Medicare provision of the Social Security Act—to repeal the arbitrary exclusion of eyeglasses, eye exams, hearing aids, hearing exams, and dental care from Medicare coverage. Two short lines in the U.S. Code have barred that coverage for 50 years. I simply delete those lines. I urge my congressional colleagues to enact this quick, easy, and necessary reform.

Medicare should provide health coverage for every part of your body, including eyes, ears, and teeth. Over 50 million Americans enjoy Medicare coverage. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of Medicare, let's guarantee to 50 million Americans the health care they need in order to look into the eyes of the ones they love, to see our Fourth of July fireworks each year, and to hear it when freedom rings.

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EMBRACE TRADE OPPORTUNITIES WITH ASIA

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

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, earlier this summer Democrats and Republicans came together to pass a trade authorization bill that set the standards for any trade deal that the United States negotiates with other countries.

It guarantees oversight by Congress, it guarantees transparency for the public, and it guarantees that our negotiators have the opportunity to get the best deal for our workers, our farmers, our ranchers, and our employers.

This week trade negotiators from 12 different countries around the Pacific Rim are meeting in Hawaii for negotiations with the Trans-Pacific Partnership. It is a deal that will open doors for American businesses to sell their products overseas and create jobs right here at home.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is this: 95 percent of the world's consumers live outside of the United States; 80 percent of the world's purchasing power is outside of the United States.

We need to allow our American companies to compete and to be able to sell

their products and goods and services or we will fall behind.

In addition, these negotiations will allow America to act as a counterweight to the growing influence of China in the region.

If the United States doesn't write the rules for the global economy, China will step in and write them, and it won't be to the benefit of American workers and businesses.

Mr. Speaker, while Congress and the American people should and will vet any deal that results from the current Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations, it is important to understand what a successful agreement will mean here at home.

For starters, it means boosting pay and higher wages. That is because jobs that rely on trade pay 18 percent higher than those jobs that don't. It also means boosting job growth right here in America. That is because one in five jobs are tied to trade.

In Minnesota, Mr. Speaker, 775,000 jobs are currently supported by trade, and new trade with Asia will enhance and support that opportunity to build on new success.

It also means boosting our country's small- and medium-sized businesses. In Minnesota, 90 percent of these small businesses are the companies that export goods and services.

Now, that being said, there is still a lot of work that needs to be done by our negotiators to make sure they reach an agreement that is best for the American people. We need cooperation from the other countries that are involved in these negotiations.

Canada needs to step up to the plate on tariff and quota issues dealing with their dairy and their egg industries. Japan needs to step up on agriculture issues.

Progress still needs to be made to ensure that American intellectual property is protected. However, with commitment from our trading partners, I am confident that we can overcome these remaining hurdles.

Mr. Speaker, we need trade deals where everyone benefits and everyone follows the rules. We live in an interconnected world, and we should be embracing opportunities that open more markets for American goods and services.

It is time to show the world that America will continue to lead the way in the 21st century global economy.

REMEMBERING DIRECTOR ROBERT PARKER OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

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

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart. I am deeply saddened by the death of former Miami-Dade County Police Director Robert Parker. I extend my sincerest sympathies to his family at this difficult time.

Director Parker was a friend and a true humanitarian. Throughout his career in law enforcement with the Miami-Dade County Police Department, he was committed to making south Florida a safer place to work, to live, and to visit. He was well respected and celebrated, and he fought to create opportunities for men and women of color.

As a longtime mentor and leader of the 5000 Role Models of Excellence Project, Director Parker worked closely with me to save at-risk minority boys and young men.

His impact is evident by the thousands of success stories of Role Model boys who, under his mentorship, have gone on to college and thriving careers. The 5000 Role Models of Excellence Project in south Florida owes Director Parker a huge debt of gratitude.

Director Parker testified before Congress on behalf of violence in the Black community. He testified before Congress about the tragic death of Trayvon Martin. He went on to be featured on CNN, MSNBC, and all of our local TV shows.

Because of his knowledge, he went on to serve as a consultant for cities all over this country. Our boys and our community were so very, very proud of this wonderful role model.

Mr. Speaker, Director Parker adored his family, his sweet, sweet grandchildren, his daughter, Kalika, his son, Robert, Jr., his son, Kyron, and his devoted wife and the love of his life, Veronica.

Our great Nation has lost a patriot who lived to embody the principles of equality, justice, and freedom upon which America is founded. To fully understand our loss, you must first understand the treasure that we all shared in Director Parker.

Director Parker showed a bright intellect and caring nature, growing up as a child in the rural community of Monticello, Florida.

He bravely served in the United States Army. He joined the Miami Police Department in 1976, when it was still known as the Dade County Police Safety Department. He was a bright and eager young officer who wanted to make his community safer.

Mr. Speaker, Director Parker was an officer's officer. He worked hard, and he made great sacrifices for his career through the love and support of his family.

He enjoyed a storied rise up the ladder of police leadership because of his determination to solve crimes. He was affectionately called "Bobby" by his friends and colleagues, but he was also nicknamed "Marathon Man."

He famously earned that name by giving a foot chase to catch one of the most notorious thieves in Miami-Dade County history.

The suspect had consistently eluded capture because he was too crafty and fast for most officers, but not too fast for Robert Parker.

His determination is what set him apart from others. He did not view his

responsibility to his community as an adjective, something that was hard or tedious. However, he saw it as a verb. It was something that he had to do.

He was never concerned about the spotlight or awards, but his dutiful nature and bravery made it almost impossible to deny him recognition.

Mr. Speaker, Director Parker's service to south Florida and our Nation had an underlying theme that permeated everything he did: his love for his community.

He understood that the best police officers are not the police who wore the badges, but the best police officers were the people who paid their mortgages, who sent their kids to school, and who worked hard to build their community.

Residents were always quick to ignore the false notion of no snitching and gave Director Parker information that solved crimes.

His sense of community and respect eventually led to his promotion to director of the Miami-Dade Police Department in 2004. His appointment was historic by his being the very first African American to hold that post, and he opened the door for many others to follow.

Dade County has the largest police force in the southeast United States, leading over 4,700 sworn and civilian employees.

As director, he worked to create a more diverse agency and create opportunities for minorities and women. He was an exemplary leader and even earned the respect of the police union.

He retired in 2009 after 33 years. Our mentors look up to him. His absence will create a huge void.

Mr. Speaker, America has lost an iconic law enforcement officer. His legacy will live in the hearts of all of us forever. My remarks will be entered into the official CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, and they will then be permanently placed in the Library of Congress.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has agreed to without amendment a concurrent resolution of the House of the following title:

H. Con. Res. 64. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for a ceremony to present the Congressional Gold Medal to the Monuments Men.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed bills and a concurrent resolution of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 242. An act to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide leave to any new Federal employee who is a veteran with a service-connected disability rated at 30 percent or more for purposes of undergoing medical treatment for such disability, and for other purposes.

S. 614 An act to provide access to and use of information by Federal agencies in order

to reduce improper payments, and for other purposes.

S. 764. An act to reauthorize and amend the National Sea Grant College Program Act, and for other purposes.

S. Con. Res. 20. Concurrent resolution recognizing and honoring the 25th anniversary of the date of enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

THE IMPROVING COAL COMBUSTION RESIDUALS REGULATION ACT OF 2015

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, responsible use and recycle of coal ash has the ability to reduce waste, provide construction materials, and keep utility costs low.

This past April the EPA released yet another rule aimed at coal by mandating new standards for the disposal and storage of coal combustion residuals.

As a result of this proposal, the House considered and passed H.R. 1734, the Improving Coal Combustion Residuals Regulation Act of 2015. This legislation codifies the base standards of EPA's final proposed rule, while also giving flexibility to the States to implement.

Specifically, H.R. 1734 will allow States to create and enforce their own coal ash recycling permit programs. It also sets up enforceable State permit programs while utilizing the EPA's minimum requirements and will protect 316,000 jobs.

Mr. Speaker, States also have the option to make their requirements more stringent than the EPA's final rule if they choose. I strongly support and was happy to vote for H.R. 1734 and the responsible use of coal and coal ash.

PENNSYLVANIA HEMLOCKS AND THE WOOLLY ADELGID

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, recently I visited the Tionesta Research Natural Area of the Allegheny National Forest. This old-growth area is home to many 600-year-old hemlock trees.

During this visit, Mr. Speaker, I spoke to forestry officials about efforts to fight the woolly adelgid. I even applied a treatment designed to combat the invasive insect to one of these massive trees.

Mr. Speaker, many States are involved in the effort to fight the adelgid, which originated in Japan and was first found in the United States in the early 1950s. It can kill a hemlock tree within a few years after it becomes infested.

In 2012, I teamed with Federal researchers and those from my alma mater, Penn State University, at a forum I hosted to discuss efforts to save our State tree, the Eastern Hemlock.

As the chairman of the Conservation and Forestry Subcommittee, I am proud Pennsylvanians are among those

leading the way in fighting this disease and protecting our forests and the economic stimulus that these forests provide both through timber and through tourism, making sure that these magnificent trees which have stood for centuries will stand tall for future generations.

SPECIAL NEEDS TRUST FAIRNESS ACT

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, July 26, we marked the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The passage of this landmark legislation signified a commitment to eliminating barriers faced by millions of individuals with differing levels of disability.

It required businesses, buildings, transportation, and other services to accommodate those living with disabilities and guaranteed equal opportunities for workers with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, 25 years later it is apparent that we have made tremendous strides in upholding the intent of this vastly important civil rights law.

Today countless Americans are empowered to shape their own lives and plan their own futures as they experience their daily obstacles decreasing over time. While we have so much to celebrate, there is always more progress to be made.

This Congress I introduced the Special Needs Trust Fairness Act with the goal of eliminating a current prohibition on a person with a disability to create his or her own special needs trust.

This long overdue legislative fix was recently passed by the Senate Finance Committee, and I am committed to working with my colleagues to guide this and similar measures through the legislative processes here in the House.

THE HIGHWAY TRUST FUND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, we are on a dangerous path. First, my Republican colleagues pulled two critical appropriation bills from the floor simply because their party cannot come to an agreement on a flag that represents a very dark time in our Nation's history.

Second, my colleagues across the aisle, rather than focusing their energy on passing comprehensive immigration reform, passed a poisonous anti-immigrant bill in response to an isolated incident in the city of San Francisco, pulling money away from our law enforcement funding for public safety.

Then they refuse to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank, which helps ensure that Americans' businesses can compete with their global competitors.

And now the House Republicans refuse to come to the table yet again to provide a robust, long-term funding bill for our decaying infrastructure system in America.