

them to foreigners. Americans have every right to be angry at Washington elected officials who care more about special interest campaign contributions than American voters who elected us. I hope those Americans will remember their anger during 2016's primary and general elections. That is the way to force Washington to represent us.

Mr. Speaker, I can't speak for anybody else, but, as for me, MO BROOKS from Alabama's Fifth Congressional District, I fight for the economic interests of American citizens and against policies that undermine the struggling American voters who sent us here. That is part of the reason why I voted against December's financially irresponsible omnibus spending bill—and am proud of it.

MALHEUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, with the odd drama playing out in Oregon where armed thugs have taken over a Federal wildlife facility, it is important to reflect on what the wildlife refuge system is all about.

If these people had any argument with the President, it was with President Roosevelt, who 108 years ago established the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge as a response to protect natural resources, especially the slaughter of wild birds for feathers to adorn women's hats.

It is ironic that the President, who in his younger days participated in the slaughter of over 6 million buffalo that roamed the Midwest plains on a magnificent ecostructure, realized the necessity of protecting these resources. Today we benefit from the foresight of this conservation President who provided the cornerstone of environmental protection that enriches us all.

The notion that somehow this is the "wild west," where people can do with public land what they want, is thoroughly discredited. This mind-set from the 1800s that there were endless, wide-open spaces, where people could do what they wished, when they wished, where they wished, is tinged with regret and tragedy. We took away the land from Native Americans that our government had given to them in solemn treaty, ratified by Congress.

The mind-set that public lands of the West were to be exploited as rapidly as possible is still embodied in the Mining Act of 1872, which essentially allows anyone, including foreign mining operations, to exploit our country's mineral resources at basically no cost and with no enforceable obligation to repair the damage they inflicted. The West is now blighted with thousands of abandoned mines and oil and gas wells that will risk being a permanent scar on the landscape. While private profit

was pursued, the public was left with the consequences and the cost of clean-up, if it ever occurs.

The longstanding battles over American rangeland between competing owners and between competing uses, like cattle and sheep, were not pretty. There is no doubt that there are still significant problems dealing with public land management, in part because the rules of the game are still set by the Mining Act of 1872 and the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934.

All but the most reckless individuals would agree that if these statutes were written today they would look fundamentally different with more protections and clarity. It was into this void that Teddy Roosevelt stepped, declaring critical national monuments. He established wildlife refuges to benefit countless generations to come.

These amazing treasures are not just scenic wonders. They hold extraordinarily valuable habitat for wildlife, waterfowl, helping preserve the land and the water and the ecosystem that goes far beyond what is simply spectacular to look at.

This is America's heritage. We struggle on an ongoing basis to recover from the reckless, thoughtless exploitation of the last two centuries. The vast majority of the American public supports this effort, even if they never visit the remote Western regions. Indeed, the fact that they are often inaccessible is the only way that they are preserved. Imagine tour buses, motorized vehicles, hordes of tourists, their infrastructure and their litter, and the destructive effects that would have.

The sideshow with the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge obscures a much larger and important public policy: protecting our heritage, enhancing it, and avoiding reckless behavior of a few that will penalize generations to come.

That is why the Harney Basin Wetlands Initiative of people in that region, facilitated by the refuge between 2010 and 2013, was a textbook example of collaboration, where all the stakeholders created a vision and a 20-year plan for the refuge and the surrounding landscape, including the biggest wetland restoration project ever undertaken.

It would be valuable for us to look behind the headlines to the facts on the ground, the history of the resource, the struggle for protection, the tremendous benefits for all Americans, and what the stakeholders in that region accomplished together.

REPEALING THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I was proud to vote in favor of the Restoring Americans' Healthcare Freedom Reconciliation Act, which repeals the Affordable

Care Act, or the ACA. With yesterday's passage of the bill, it marks the first time repeal of the ACA has been sent to President Obama's desk.

In the past year, several significant problems with this law have become ever more clear. We have seen a large number of healthcare co-ops go under. One major healthcare provider, UnitedHealthcare, announced it is pulling out of the ACA exchange. This system is just not sustainable.

Late last year, the Congressional Budget Office released a report stating that the ACA will lead to a reduction of work-hours equivalent to 2 million jobs over the next decade. The CBO attributes this reduction to healthcare subsidies tied to income, raising effective tax rates for Americans, and creating a disincentive for people seeking promotions or new, higher paying jobs. It also points to higher taxes and penalties as a reason for the reduction in work-hours.

In comparison, the Restoring Americans' Healthcare Freedom Reconciliation Act will reduce the Federal deficit by more than half a trillion dollars over the next 10 years. It will also eliminate costly provisions, such as the individual and employer health insurance coverage mandates, the Cadillac tax on high-cost plans, and it will enhance the solvency of Medicare. It also ensures that Federal tax dollars will not go to providers of abortion.

Mr. Speaker, over the past several years, dozens of ACA reforms have been signed into law. However, we have only scratched the surface when it comes to addressing problems with this law. It is time to come together to support a comprehensive approach that ensures responsible use of taxpayer dollars and fixes the issues affecting our Nation's healthcare system.

HAYMARKET CAFE

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, today I am honored to share the story of the Haymarket Cafe, started by brothers Peter and David Simpson, in Northampton, Massachusetts.

Mr. Speaker, one of the surest signs of a vibrant local economy is a lively restaurant scene. You know a town or a region is humming economically when you have a wide variety of restaurants to choose from. It is a sign that people have enough money left over after paying all of their bills to spend on treating themselves and their families. It is a strong indication that people feel secure in the direction of the economy.

But for millions of low-wage workers across the country, the story is more complicated than that, and the picture is not all that pretty. For all the economic vibrancy associated with restaurant culture—and though restaurants employ almost 1 in 10 private

sector workers—restaurant workers are among the worst paid, worst treated within the economy as a whole.

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While non-restaurant private sector workers make a median hourly wage of \$18, restaurant workers earn a median hourly wage of \$10, including tips. The results are predictable in that more than 16 percent of restaurant workers live below the poverty line.

This picture is made even worse by how it is skewed along race and gender lines. The highest paid positions in restaurants tend to be held by men and people who are White while the lowest paid positions are typically held by women and people of color. At the bottom of the ladder are undocumented workers, who comprise over 15 percent of the restaurant workforce, more than twice the rate for non-restaurant sectors.

The good news is that it doesn't have to be this way. There are forward-thinking restaurant owners who are choosing the high road, restaurants where conscious efforts are made to break down gender and ethnic divisions and that choose to pay a living wage with good benefits.

If you ask them, the owners of these establishments will tell you that they choose this path because it is not only the right thing to do, but it is also the smart thing to do financially. They choose this path because it is a solid business model that improves the chances of success in a highly competitive industry.

I am proud to represent one of those restaurants in my district. The Haymarket Cafe in Northampton, Massachusetts, has led the way for almost a quarter century in treating its employees with respect and in paying them a living wage.

I attended an event a couple of weeks ago at the Haymarket Cafe at which the owner, Peter Simpson, announced that his restaurant was moving to a \$15 per hour minimum wage and would be eliminating tips. Now, I have known Peter for a long time, and I was not surprised that he would take such a step.

Peter opened the Haymarket with his brother, David, almost 25 years ago. From the beginning, they were committed to paying a fair wage and in creating a positive work environment for their employees. In talking to Peter, I realized that his decision, while it reflected his idealism, was rooted in hard-nosed business sense.

You don't survive and thrive for a quarter century in the highly competitive restaurant industry, especially in a small, tight-knit community like Northampton, if your business model isn't airtight. Every decision you make has to make sense financially in order to succeed and stay competitive.

The decision to go to a \$15 per hour minimum wage and eliminate tips was not something Peter took lightly. He did his homework. He looked at other

restaurants in other cities that had made a similar move. He talked to all of his employees. He worked closely with the Pioneer Valley Workers Center, which is leading the charge to better the lives of low-wage immigrant workers in western Massachusetts.

Eliminating tips allowed Peter to make the wages between better paid waiters and less well-paid kitchen staff more equitable. It allowed his wait staff to earn a wage they could count on, rather than having to depend on the tipping whims of customers. It also gave him increased staffing flexibility, as he could train all of his staff to do all jobs so he could more easily shift people around when necessary. In committing to a \$15 per hour minimum wage, Peter also increased staff loyalty while decreasing turnover and training costs.

As a result of Peter's bold decision, the Haymarket Cafe has been overwhelmed by an outpouring of support. Staff and customers are equally enthusiastic, and business has jumped. This commitment to wage equity has shown, once again, to be a sound business strategy and has shown that a business based on such principles can provide a decent living for its staff and can contribute to the economic health of the community.

Mr. Speaker, the Haymarket Cafe is living proof, especially in an industry with such a dismal track record on wages, that paying a living wage is good for business and that a commitment to wage equity makes financial sense. The restaurant industry can and must do better, and I am proud to say the Haymarket Cafe is leading the way.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S EXECUTIVE ACTION ON THE SECOND AMENDMENT

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

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week the President took aim at our Second Amendment rights.

We know his purpose was to restrict the constitutional right of law-abiding citizens. It will undermine our personal privacy rights. It will make it to where due process is taken away from many of our citizens, but it won't stop criminals from carrying firearms. As a father and as a grandfather, my heart is broken over the many tragedies and attacks that have occurred around this Nation, but this won't cure the problem.

In this Congress, we must fight for the rights of our Constitution. We must also use the courts to fight for those rights. We must do more.

Mr. Speaker, not only I, but you and every Member of this Congress, took an oath of office when we took these positions. We took that oath, and it was to uphold and to defend the Constitution, all of the Constitution, not just the First Amendment, but the Second Amendment as well and every part thereof.

When I took that oath, I took it very, very seriously. I am doing my part. I am upholding the oath that I took. I believe the President should uphold his.

HONORING DR. SHARON ELLIOTT-BYNUM, A TRAILBLAZER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my condolences on the passing of a giant in the Durham, North Carolina, community, a trailblazer, one who dedicated her life to improving health outcomes for disadvantaged citizens, including veterans.

This trailblazer, Mr. Speaker, was my friend, Dr. Sharon Elliott-Bynum. Sharon passed away on Sunday, January 3, at the young age of 58, 2 days before her 59th birthday.

We lost this giant far too soon, but not before she revolutionized the delivery of care for those in need through the founding of Durham's first free-standing, comprehensive healthcare clinic, called Healing with CAARE.

My first visit as Durham's Congressman was an enlightening visit to CAARE. I saw Sharon at work, I saw paid staff, and I saw dozens of community volunteers. We mourn this tremendous loss, but we also celebrate Sharon's remarkable life, which was replete with the success that many can only hope to achieve.

Born in Durham, Sharon Elliott-Bynum was a graduate of Northern High School, Durham Technical Institute, the Watts School of Nursing, and my alma mater, North Carolina Central University. She also received a master's degree and a Ph.D. from Victory International College.

Sharon was a dedicated member of a great sorority, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. As a member of the Durham Alumnae Chapter, founded in 1931, she led by example. Sharon was also a member of the National Council of Negro Women, of Sigma Theta Tau International, of the Top Ladies of Distinction, and of many more service organizations. Finally, she was a faithful member of the Faith Assembly Christian Center in Durham.

Dr. Elliott-Bynum was attracted to the field of nursing when she, at the age of 16, began volunteering at the historic Lincoln Community Health Center. Sharon's volunteerism motivated her to pursue a nursing career. So, in 1995, Dr. Elliott-Bynum and her late sister, Patricia—"Pat" she called her—founded Healing with CAARE, Inc.

What began as a nonprofit, community-based provider of services for individuals who were living with HIV expanded to being the primary healthcare home for more than 1,000 individuals who live with cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and obesity. CAARE