

ObamaCare. My first month in office on February 3, 2015, House Republicans successfully voted to repeal ObamaCare. In December of that same year, the Senate passed our legislation to repeal ObamaCare. President Obama vetoed it at that time. But we will have a new President next year.

Healthcare costs are on the rise because of ObamaCare. ObamaCare adds burdensome taxes, regulations, and mandates onto American consumers. The limited choice in health insurance plans is harming families and their budgets.

ObamaCare has killed 2.9 million jobs a year, has continued to raise health insurance costs, and has also placed the Federal Government in between patients and their doctors. Who are these 2.9 million Americans? They are disproportionately low-wage workers earning well below the average annual wage for all workers, which is less than \$46,000 a year, according to the Congressional Budget Office. The people who are hurt the most by ObamaCare are the ones that ObamaCare is supposed to help the most.

Research done by the National Center for Policy Analysis found that the average monthly premium costs in every demographic rose substantially after ObamaCare was implemented.

□ 1015

West Virginians who get their health insurance through employer-sponsored programs are paying some of the highest rates in the United States. In West Virginia, premiums through employer-sponsored health insurance programs have climbed at a steady rate of about 6.4 percent annually since 2010, and it keeps getting worse. The 33,421 West Virginians who are currently enrolled in the Affordable Care Act do not need to see their rates hiked up again.

As a Republican in Congress, I want to ensure that everyone has access to health care, but it will be quality health care that people choose for themselves. That is why House Republicans have come up with a plan we call A Better Way. Our plan recognizes that people deserve more patient-centered care, not more bureaucracy. That means more choices, not more mandates.

A Better Way plan offers many improvements that will help West Virginia's Second Congressional District, including commonsense reforms to allow health insurance sales across State lines. You should have the freedom and flexibility to choose the care that is best for you. Insurers should compete for your business and treat you fair. You and your family should have access to the best lifesaving treatment in the world.

Under Chairman TOM PRICE's leadership, I believe that our healthcare system in America will thrive. Again, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to my friend, Dr. TOM PRICE.

HONORING VIRGINIA STRATTON

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

Mr. LOEBSACK. Mr. Speaker, I come to the House floor today to honor one of my longtime district staffers, Virginia Stratton, who retired recently.

Virginia had been with my office, serving the people of Iowa, since I first came into office in January 2007. Since then, she has handled more than 3,300 cases for Iowans having issues with the Department of Defense, the Department of Labor, and the Postal Service; but, by far, the largest portion of her cases involved the Veterans Administration.

As I travel across my district, all 24 counties, meeting with veterans, it never fails that one of the first things I hear is about how hard Virginia fought on their behalf or on behalf of their loved ones to cut through the red-tape at the VA.

Whether it was securing medals for veterans who served but didn't receive their proper recognition, or helping expedite a disability appeal, there was nothing—and I say nothing—Virginia would not do to ensure our veterans received the assistance that they needed. I always knew that if Virginia was on the case, there would be no stone left unturned and no question left unasked. She worked every day for the past 10 years to ensure our veterans received the care they earned and rightly deserved.

As a military parent myself, I believe we have no greater responsibility as a nation than to ensure our veterans are treated with the same dignity and honor with which they served our country. There is no one—no one, folks—who epitomizes that sentiment more than Virginia. She has been one of the greatest champions for veterans, and there was no issue that was too small or too great for her to take on.

In the nearly 10 years that Virginia worked for my office, she literally personally affected the lives of thousands of Iowans. Virginia's retirement is a loss for the people of Iowa, but the efforts and hours she invested in working on behalf of our veterans will never be forgotten. On behalf of the people of Iowa and all of the veterans of America, my wife Terry and I wish Virginia the best in the next chapter of her life.

TRIBUTE TO CHAIRMAN HAL ROGERS

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

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a dear colleague, mentor, and friend as he is concluding his 6 years as chairman of the House Appropriations Committee.

I have had the honor and pleasure of serving with Chairman HAL ROGERS for

the last 2 years. Since day one of his chairmanship, he has been the driving force to revive the appropriations process. Anyone who knows Chairman ROGERS, knows his top priority is regular order.

During his chairmanship, he has managed 140 appropriations bills on the floor, and managed more than 600 important oversight and budget hearings and markups. He has worked every day to ensure that the taxpayers' dollars are being used wisely and responsibly.

He has stopped wasteful spending, saving the country billions of dollars. He has also invested in higher priority programs, those that help keep our Nation on the right track, keep us safe, keep us secure, fight against drug abuse, and promote critical rural infrastructure needs. He has never lost sight of his home in Kentucky and the people he represents in Congress. Their priorities are his priorities.

I know this well because my district is right next door. We are only separated by the Tug Fork River, a small, narrow body of water that goes through the hills of Appalachia. Chairman ROGERS and I share the good people of Appalachia. We know the greatness of our people. We know how hard-working they are. It is the coal miners, it is the farmers, it is the factory workers, it is the teachers, it is the backbone of America we both have the honor of representing.

I have been able to see firsthand Chairman ROGERS' commitment to the people of Kentucky, his fight for the coal miners and retirees, his fight of the opioid crisis that is devastating communities throughout our region and this country, his support for education, and his leadership in creating the SOAR program, shaping our Appalachian region.

Chairman ROGERS has left an indelible mark as chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. We thank him for his leadership in that role over these past 6 years. We have a better Appropriations Committee because of it and a better institution here in the House of Representatives, thanks to the leadership of Chairman HAL ROGERS.

I ask my fellow Members to join me in thanking him for his service as chairman. I am honored to look forward to working with him in his continuing capacity here in the House of Representatives.

Thank you, Chairman ROGERS.

COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF LEONARD ROTHSTEIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. MENG) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MENG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the life of my constituent Leonard Rothstein, who passed away on September 16, 2016.

Mr. Rothstein bravely served in the Korean war as a private first class, contributing to the war effort as a radioman. Mr. Rothstein was honorably

discharged from the Army on October 23, 1953. He received a National Defense Service Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the United Nations Service Medal, and the Korean Service Medal, with two Bronze Stars for his service. Mr. Rothstein took great pride in his service to our country and requested to be buried with his military medals. He received a military funeral at the Sinai Chapel in Fresh Meadows, Queens.

After being discharged from the war, Mr. Rothstein brought his work ethic to Local Union 3 IBEW and the New York Hotel Trades Council as an electrician. Anyone would be proud to know someone as dedicated to their community as Leonard.

Mr. Rothstein has been described as an unassuming, kindhearted person who rarely had a bad thing to say about anyone. He traveled with his wife, Gus, to every State in the Nation by bus, train, or plane since they didn't drive. Mr. Rothstein was beloved by his family, and is survived by his wife, his sister, his two sons, his five grandchildren, and great grandson.

I am happy to stand here today as Mr. Rothstein's representative to express my gratitude for his bravery in service and his hard work as a union member. I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing one of our Nation's veterans, and offering condolences to his family during this time.

CONGRATULATING GENERAL JIM MATTIS

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful that President-elect Donald Trump has made another excellent appointment in selecting General Jim Mattis to serve as Secretary of Defense to rebuild our military.

A recent article in The Wall Street Journal notes, "General Mattis has seen the cost of wars enough to want to deter them, but he also knows that if you fight them you need to do so with the force and will to win."

President-elect Trump stated that General Jim Mattis is "the closest thing to General George Patton that we have."

The recent service of General Mattis in the Middle East makes him uniquely qualified to address threats to service-members overseas and American families here at home. With General Mattis serving as Secretary of Defense, our military will continue to be the best fighting force in the world, our men and women in uniform will be supported, and our military families will be protected. As a 31-year veteran and the grateful dad of four sons who have served overseas in the global war on terrorism, I am confident that our goal of peace through strength will be achieved under the leadership of General Jim Mattis.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and may the President, by his actions, never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES IS STILL BARACK OBAMA

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I just got a call from a reporter about a tweet, which the President-elect has made, canceling the contract with The Boeing Company and the Federal Government to build Air Force One. Now, the last time I looked, I think that the President of the United States is still Barack Obama. He will be President of this country until the 20th of January.

What we have right now is a President-elect running around the world with his tweet bar making statements that are disruptive and distractive for the American public. He calls Taiwan and raises questions about our relationship with China as though he were the Secretary of State, but he has not even found anyone to do that job. He should be in the transition office figuring out how he makes a smooth transition of the American Government from the efficiently run government of Mr. Obama to his administration, not making the decisions himself and going out and announcing them through his tweet at 3 a.m. because he can't sleep.

This kind of operation is the operation of somebody who is used to running a big business. When he is president of Trump casino or Trump Tower, he can act like that. He can come in and say: Do this, do that, do this, do that.

I don't know if he understands, Mr. Speaker, that you and the House of Representatives are the ones who made the contract and appropriated the money for that plane. That is the democratic process of this country. It is not done by the President getting up in the morning and tweeting out 147 characters and ending a contract with hundreds of jobs at risk of people in my district, good hardworking Americans.

He will go down to Indianapolis, Indiana, and walk around and say: I have saved 1,000 jobs.

We still haven't seen the contract. We don't know what the deal is, how long the jobs have to last, or how many of them have to last. We don't know anything. We just know that a tweet went out that: We have. And then he went and did a big rally down there and did a victory lap, but there is no piece of paper.

Mr. Speaker, if I were to make a recommendation to the people in Indianapolis, it would be: Talk to the Indians, to the Native Americans, about the treaties that have been made with the United States of America and how good they are and how hard you have to fight to make those treaties work.

□ 1030

He made a treaty with Carrier, which will get \$7 million from Indiana. Vice President Pence will give \$7 million from Indiana to Carrier, and then maybe there will be some kind of—no one knows what is going on, but the President-elect should spend his time in the transition office and decide who is going to hold the jobs that will make this country run. This is not going to be run by one man in the White House who makes pronouncements and thinks that all the world is going to throw itself down on the ground and worship him.

We have a democratic process, and the burden on the House of Representatives, as I leave it—I mean, in some ways, I am sorry to be leaving because I think it is going to be a very tough session—is to help the new President understand how a democracy actually works. It is not a big business; it is a business of the people. The 435 Members of this House take the money that comes in in taxes, and they appropriate it out as they see fit for the country. The President doesn't do that. When the Congress is done, it passes the bill to him, and then he spends the money as the Congress has decided it should be spent.

If you look at the Constitution—I am sure the President-elect has looked at the Constitution—the first Article is the Congress. We are the preeminent body in this government because we are elected by the people, and we have the power.

Stop tweeting, Mr. President-elect.

21ST CENTURY CURES

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

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the 21st Century Cures Act, a bill that recently passed the House with overwhelming bipartisan support.

I am proud that the package includes provisions for robust medical research, funding to combat opioid abuse, and support for individuals who struggle with mental illness and who are trapped in the criminal justice system. Reforming and modernizing our Nation's mental health system has been one of my top priorities. It is imperative that we help those who are struggling with mental illness get the help they need. Many tragedies can be prevented if the proper support structure is in place.

As part of the reform efforts, I was proud that legislation authored by Representative TIM MURPHY, the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act, which I strongly supported, was incorporated into 21st Century Cures. I had the opportunity to host a roundtable earlier this year in south Florida, with my friend from Pennsylvania and local stakeholders, to discuss mental health and the benefits of this important legislation.