

what is best for their children and what was unavailable to them in some far-off country. These are very real people who have no legal avenues that allow them to live and work here legally, who have no options other than to hide or leave, who have been cut off from fully integrating into our society as citizens because Congress has been fighting over immigration reform. These are the people that Mr. Bannon, Mr. Sessions, and Mr. KING have been working together for years to get out of what they call their country so that our erratic new President can point to deportations and say that he is making America great again.

What is clear from the citizenship surge and all those who want to help is that America is not only great, not only kind, not only dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal, but there are Americans and those who want to be Americans willing to stand up and resist when leaders take us in the wrong direction.

Mr. Speaker, you will see millions of Americans and aspiring Americans marching together in American cities across our great Nation on May 1, and when you do, you will see this bond and this shared humanity this coming May 1.

CUBA AND VENEZUELA

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

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss two foreign policy areas that are important to our Nation, our region, and to my constituency in south Florida. Cuba and Venezuela are two countries in our hemisphere that suffer under dictatorships and are avowed enemies of the United States.

In my native homeland of Cuba, we have seen human rights violations on the rise ever since the U.S. concessions to the Castro regime in December 2014. One example is the case of Dr. Eduardo Cardet of Holguin, Cuba, pictured here. He is a medical doctor and the leader of the Christian Liberation Movement who was savagely beaten in front of his wife and two children and has been imprisoned since November 2016. Just days ago he was sentenced to 3 years in prison.

Dr. Cardet is condemned and sentenced because he is the voice for change and a respected human rights leader. The truth is that Eduardo Cardet has been imprisoned because he is willing—and has been doing it—to tell anyone who would listen that the Cuban people do not approve of the Castro regime. For not supporting this vile Castro dictatorship and for speaking out against such cruelty and abuses, he was sentenced to 3 years.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot stand idly by as more and more prodemocracy leaders are being beaten and arrested on the island. The President and his new administration have committed to re-

versing some of the damage inflicted by the previous administration on the cause of freedom and democracy in Cuba. Our policy in Cuba should send a strong message throughout the hemisphere that the United States will no longer remain silent on these atrocities.

It is well known that Cuba has exposed, has exported its barbaric tactics to other countries in the hemisphere, namely, Venezuela. The Venezuelan people believe that there is no justice in their land. They believe that there is no respect for law in their country, and they are right.

And what about their economy?

Well, according to the International Monetary Fund, the inflation in Venezuela last year was around 800 percent—800 percent—and the inflation projection for this year is 1,600 percent. This is not sustainable. Mr. Speaker, especially when press reports are so visual when they show that Venezuelan people are scavenging for food. They don't have any money, and they are actually leaving their country in order to find food.

Venezuela has only a little over \$10 billion worth of foreign reserves, yet it owes \$7 billion in outstanding debt payments. This tells us, Mr. Speaker, that we have, sadly, not yet hit rock bottom in Venezuela and that the situation will get worse, which is why it is so important that we begin the process to bring democratic reforms to the country now in order to prevent a larger crisis that is looming in the future.

One way to achieve this, Mr. Speaker, is to impose sanctions on human rights violators. Mr. Speaker, more targeted sanctions against those individuals who are responsible for the famine and the human rights violations that are ongoing in Venezuela are desperately needed.

Let's examine some of the individuals who I believe should be on the sanctions list. First off we have Maikel Moreno. This individual, months ago, used Venezuela's kangaroo courts and ratified the unjust sentence against political prisoner Leopoldo Lopez.

How was he rewarded by the Maduro regime?

He was appointed to be the president of the Supreme Justice Tribunal. Just appalling.

Next up is Marco Torres. Marco Torres is the Venezuelan Minister of Food. Let's examine his awful track record. The food shortages in Venezuela are rampant, and it is difficult for the people to feed themselves or their families. To make matters worse, Mr. Speaker, press reports indicate that Venezuelans are eating from trash in the street just to survive. The Venezuelan people deserve better.

Next we have Jose Viloria Sosa, this gentleman right here. He is the director of the military prison of Ramo Verde. This decrepit character is responsible for the inhumane treatment and abusive tactics against human rights activist Leopoldo Lopez.

Lastly, Susana Barreiros Rodriguez. In 2015, she was the judge of the 28th Trial Circuit Court of Caracas who was the one who originally unjustly sentenced Leopoldo Lopez to jail.

We must provide a voice for those whose rights continue to be trampled, and take swift and decisive actions such as imposing sanctions on all of these regime officials and many more who facilitate those abuses.

When it comes to the tyranny in Cuba and in Venezuela, Mr. Speaker, we must have a clear vision and a clear understanding of the nature of these rogue regimes that do not respect the rule of law, do not respect freedom of expression, and do not respect any kind of human dignity.

HEALTHCARE TROJAN HORSE

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

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, when Queen Helen of Sparta was abducted by the Trojan prince Paris, Helen's jilted husband convinced his brother, a Greek king, to lead an expedition to retrieve her. He was accompanied by a fleet of more than a thousand ships. They crossed the sea to Troy and demanded Helen's return.

The siege, punctuated by all sorts of battles and skirmishes, lasted more than 10 years until one day when Odysseus had a bright idea. He said: Hey, guys, let's build a really massive wooden horse. Let's pretend like we have given up and sailed our fleet behind some island, but really about 30 of us will hide inside the horse. We will have someone tell the Trojans that it is some kind of gift to Athena, the goddess of war, and they will haul it into their city. When they are asleep, we will all sneak out, open the gates for everybody else, and totally kill everybody in the city.

And that is the legend of the Trojan horse.

So what is the moral of that story and why am I reciting Greek lore on the floor of Congress today?

Well, because history has a way of repeating itself. Today we have our own Trojan horse, a so-called GOP healthcare bill, TrumpCare, that professes to be about health care but, in reality, is a Trojan horse to give tax breaks to the wealthiest in the country.

Let's take a serious look at it. We are told that it is the replacement to the Affordable Care Act, a bill that has offered insurance to over 20 million people in this country. Now that replacement is supposed to fix the problems of the Affordable Care Act and ensure health care for everyone, as promised by President Trump.

But the covert part of TrumpCare was that he got busted last week when the Congressional Budget Office, our nonpartisan agency that evaluates bills, said that, in reality, the bill does little to improve health care. In fact, it

said 24 million people would lose access to health care, not gain it. And it said older Americans would pay more for health insurance than under the Affordable Care Act and get fewer subsidies, and that more people on Medicaid would lose access to health care as well.

So how can a supposed healthcare bill actually reduce health care?

Well, when it is only a pretend healthcare bill.

And what else did the CBO say?

Well, they said this bill also includes almost \$600 billion in tax cuts for the wealthiest individuals in our country, insurance companies, and Big Pharma.

It gets worse. Those tax cuts for the wealthy, just how bad are they?

Well, the 400 richest families in the country making more than \$300 million a year will get an annual tax cut of \$7 million each. So Charles Koch and Betsy DeVos get \$7 million a year while a retired farmer in Janesville, Wisconsin, in Speaker RYAN's district, earning \$26,000 a year may have to pay \$14,600 for the same health care she got under the Affordable Care Act, but the old cost was only about \$1,700. That is a 750 percent increase on low-income, older Americans so the richest can bank millions.

□ 1015

And the CBO said another tax cut in TrumpCare provides about \$275 billion in tax breaks that only the top 2 percent of Americans can get, while 98 percent of us will never see a dime.

And who else gets tax cuts? Insurance companies get a tax break of about \$145 billion, drug companies get a tax break of \$25 billion, and medical device companies get a break of about \$20 billion. That is almost \$600 billion worth of tax cuts for the wealthy, and what do we get? Less health care for more money.

That is not a serious healthcare alternative. That is a tax cut for the wealthy disguised as health care, and you and I get to foot the bill.

That is what is called a Trojan horse. And you have to be especially careful these days because Trojans are a little bit different than they used to be, and they are only used when you get—well, the same thing this will do to America, Mr. Speaker.

IMPORTANCE OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, recently, the House Education and the Workforce Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education hosted a hearing to discuss the state of career and technical education in America, as well as changes that can be made to strengthen CTE and better prepare students of all ages for the workforce.

One of the biggest challenges facing career and technical education is the stigma associated with it. Through the years, we have seen wrongheaded claims that students involved in the trades lacked ambition. Those misplaced assumptions are slowly subsiding, but not soon enough.

CTE has established itself as a path that many high-achieving students choose in pursuit of industry certification and hands-on skills that they can use right out of high school, in training programs, or in college.

At this hearing, we heard from many knowledgeable witnesses, including Mike Rowe, the television host of the television show "Dirty Jobs." Mike shared his experience as a young student who didn't know what career path he wanted to follow. So, he looked no further than his local community college.

His eyes were open to hundreds of courses that he could afford to study. And Mike said: "That experience opened doors I didn't even know existed. But that same experience is precisely what thousands of kids are discouraged from pursuing every year."

Mr. Speaker, the reality is, a huge gap exists in communities nationwide. There are jobs out there, good family-sustaining jobs, but the unemployed or underemployed are either ill-prepared or lack the appropriate training to fill these vacancies. The answer to this problem starts with career and technical education.

That is why last Congress I introduced Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act. This bill, which passed the House in the fall by a vote of 405–5, aimed to close the skills gap by modernizing the Federal investment in career and technical education programs and connecting educators with industry stakeholders—the job creators.

I look forward to reintroducing similar legislation with my Career and Technical Education Caucus co-chair, Congressman JIM LANGEVIN from Rhode Island, later this month.

During the hearing, Mike Rowe described naysayers as viewing a job in the trades as a "vocational consolation prize." Well, Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. We must change this stigma, this bias, and help encourage American students to study a career that they are interested in and that they are passionate about. The list is endless with career and technical education, and the jobs are out there.

HEALTH CARE CONCERN

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

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, today, I celebrate the birth of my twin daughters, Sky and Sage as they turn 2 years old.

Happy birthday, Sky; happy birthday, Sage. You both have made your mom, Monica, and me very, very

happy. Because of you both, I am the happiest man on Earth. We love you very much, and I miss you very much when I am here in the people's House and you are in California in our family's house. The best feelings in the world are when I get home after a long week here and you two girls run up to me with open arms and you run into my arms screaming: Daddy, daddy, daddy. I will never forget those moments ever, and I thank you for them.

Mr. Speaker, my daughters mean the world to me, and my daughters' future and their health mean the world to me. And now, more than ever, I want to protect health care for Sky and Sage and for the millions of Americans across our great Nation.

I am an emergency physician, and I have spent my career caring for patients across the Nation from Boston to Pittsburgh and to the Coachella Valley where I grew up and which I now represent. Many of my patients, far too many, didn't have health insurance. And I have seen firsthand what it means for people when they don't have health coverage and can't afford care.

I know what uninsured patients look like. They are the senior who comes in with emphysema and having to be intubated and put on a respiratory machine because they didn't have health insurance to see their doctor. It is the diabetic who comes in in a diabetic coma and spends 2 months in the ICU because they couldn't afford their insulin, or they couldn't see their doctor. Or that 60-year-old farmworker who had urinary problems and lower back pains, which scares me that he might have prostate cancer metastasized to the lumbar spine, and when asked when was the last time he saw a doctor, he said 6 years ago because that is when he lost his health insurance.

This Republican plan should be called the pain and suffering act or the pay more for less act, because that is what it will do. This bill will add 14 million more uninsured people within 1 year and 24 million more over the next decade.

We need to move beyond the Republican hyperpartisan ideology and listen to patients and their concerns. My patients in the emergency department ask me two of the most common questions, which are: Am I going to be okay? How much is this going to cost me?

I have never cared for an uninsured patient who chose to be uninsured. They didn't have health insurance because they couldn't afford it. And that includes the young, healthy patient who was in an unfortunate car accident and was left paralyzed. I never met a doctor who preferred their patients to be uninsured.

Yet, we know that the Republican bill's age tax—huge cuts to Medicaid—will reduce coverage and make millions more uninsured, increase costs of uncompensated care, while giving tax breaks to millionaires, raising out-of-pocket costs, and raising premiums and deductibles.