

time, five-star accredited and twice named Chamber of the Year. And as we say in Texas: "That ain't braggin' if it's true."

I want to recognize a few of our hard-working business leaders who are being celebrated this week:

Ambassador of the Year, Danny Soliz;

Volunteer of the Year, Kathy Timms; Business Person of the Year, Chris Lonngren;

Business of the Year, Bayer Crop Science; and

Entrepreneur of the Year, Shara Konechney.

Congrats to all of these folks. Congrats to my friend, Eddie McBride.

Mr. Speaker, I thank them for their leadership, and thanks to all of our small businesses. They are the heartbeat of west Texas, Mr. Speaker.

BRING FORTH TAX REFORM THAT BENEFITS THE MIDDLE CLASS

(Ms. PINGREE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. PINGREE. Mr. Speaker, I recently sat down with Mainers who are terrified of the Republican tax plan:

In tears, a high school teacher listed the items she purchased for her students in need. Under this plan, she will no longer be able to deduct them.

A cancer survivor told me how she now writes off thousands of dollars of medical expenses every year—no more, under the tax plan.

A recent college graduate wondered how difficult it would be to achieve his career goals while paying off his student loan debt without a deduction for the interest.

A dairy farmer talked about a tax exemption that has allowed farmers to have more control over their businesses by forming co-ops. That is gone under the GOP tax scam.

In 10 years, one in five Mainers will pay more in Federal taxes under this plan. Their sacrifices and our national debt will pay for generous benefits to massive corporations, foreign investors, and the wealthiest of the wealthy.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to withdraw this thinly veiled handout to the one-percenters and bring forth tax reform that will actually benefit the middle class.

HONORING CAREER OF LOURDES MELUZA

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the distinguished career of Lourdes Meluza, who has recently retired after 39 years in journalism.

As a native from my homeland of Cuba and a graduate from the University of Miami—Go Canes—my alma

mater, I got to know Lourdes as she began her tenure as a writer for the Miami Herald, where she covered my first election to the Florida State House of Representatives.

In 1987, Lourdes joined Miami's Univision station, and shortly after, she became the network's D.C. correspondent, reporting to millions of Hispanics in the U.S. about important policy issues being discussed in our Nation's Capital.

For over two decades, Lourdes interviewed Presidents and Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle and heads of state. Her professionalism has earned her our respect and admiration.

Lourdes will be enjoying her well-deserved retirement in Coral Gables, in my congressional district. Lourdes told me that she never considered journalism to be a career but, rather, an adventure.

Mr. Speaker, to my esteemed amiga, I wish her all the best in her next adventure, and I look forward to seeing her in our south Florida paradise.

Godspeed, Lourdes Meluza. Felicidades, amiga.

LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD ON TAX REFORM

(Mr. SCHRADER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHRADER. Mr. Speaker, a \$1.5 trillion deficit, that is what the so-called fiscally conservative Republican friends of mine want to add to our Nation's already huge debt, a debt they decry for many years, a debt that, according to former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Mike Mullen, is the greatest threat to our country in the coming decades.

There is really no need of that—none. We can do tax reform that better advantages the middle class and small businesses without adding \$1.5 trillion to our debt. By simply making the tax benefits fairer among income groups, you can have growth-enhancing, deficit-neutral tax reform with zero—yes, zero—addition to our debt and deficit.

If a 25 percent tax rate is good enough for small businesses, it should be good enough for corporations.

There is no need to eliminate the AMT for wealthy Americans earning over \$250,000 or completely eliminating the estate tax. Tweak it, and you can protect every small business and farm in America with a very progressive Tax Code.

Why should wealthy Americans get to deduct more expenses than working men and women? A 25 percent deduction for expenses levels the playing field for everyone.

Make these types of changes and you can get rid of the gimmicks in the Republican bill and benefit the middle class. There is no need to add \$1.5 trillion to our debt.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR TAX REFORM

(Mr. ALLEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the importance of comprehensive tax reform for our families and businesses.

It has been nearly 30 years since hardworking Americans have seen any significant changes made to our confusing Tax Code. Our current system is broken. I think we all agree on that. Taxes are too high, and our families and businesses are the ones paying the price, not to mention that nobody understands it.

Two weeks ago, I was proud to cast my vote to cut, simplify, and reform taxes, and now the ball is in the Senate's court. Thankfully, as of yesterday, legislation has passed both the Senate Finance Committee and the Senate Budget Committee, and now we expect a vote in the full Senate as early as this week.

Under the Trump administration, we are growing the economy, but nothing can compare to the effect that tax reform will have on jump-starting the economy, expanding small businesses, and creating jobs.

America, it is time to go back to work. We are now closer than ever to making tax reform a reality, a new reality for families and businesses across America who deserve to keep more of their paychecks and have the opportunity to grow their businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we will uphold our important promise to deliver tax reform legislation to President Trump's desk soon.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVERS MONTH

(Mr. LANGEVIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of National Family Caregivers Month. Caregivers are our Nation's hidden heroes. They foster family stability and help those with chronic and disabling conditions avoid costly out-of-home placements. In fact, family caregivers are very often the difference between costly institutional care or staying in their home.

Family caregivers not only deserve our respect and gratitude, but also respite from the physical and emotional toll of ensuring their loved ones receive the care that they need. But if the caregivers themselves aren't taking care of their own needs, they are not going to be very effective at taking care of their loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, almost 44 million Americans are providing over \$470 billion in uncompensated care each year, if we had to put a dollar figure on it. These caregivers are our grandparents, parents, spouses, siblings, children, and

even our grandchildren. They are often the lifeline to accessible, quality care at home.

We in Congress need to do our part to support these heroes by passing the Lifespan Respite Care Reauthorization Act, which my good friend Representative GREGG HARPER and I have introduced. It is the least that we can do in appreciation of the sacrifice these family caregivers make each and every day.

CONGRATULATING PHIL BERTOLINI

(Mr. BISHOP of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BISHOP of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an impressive and dedicated public servant in Oakland County, Michigan, Phil Bertolini, who is being honored here in Washington, D.C., this week.

Phil is the chief information officer of Oakland County and has been recognized as the 2017 Public Official of the Year by Governing magazine.

Phil has spent most of his career handling technology issues for the county and has, most notably, spearheaded a program to help smaller communities gain access to better technology. In 2011, Phil created a process online allowing smaller governments to take advantage of Oakland County's state-of-the-art computing services through G2G Cloud Solutions.

Due to Phil's hard work and dedication, Oakland County's G2G Cloud Solutions now provides services to 82 agencies in Michigan and 721 users throughout the United States. Phil's experience and innovative mindset has earned Oakland County national recognition as a tech leader, being named as the second-most digitally advanced county in the country.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to congratulate Phil Bertolini on being recognized as the 2017 Public Official of the Year. I would like to personally recognize and thank him for his tireless efforts and unwavering dedication to the community.

TAX SCAM

(Mrs. BUSTOS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, what do these people have in common: a teacher who buys a prom dress for her student; a teacher who buys crayons and pencils for her students; a teacher who buys packages of paper for his students; my mom, who calls me and says, "Don't cut my Medicare. Don't let them cut my Medicare"; the person who has a heart attack or is paying hard-earned money for his or her cancer treatment?

None of those people will be able to write off their medical expenses or their educational expenses. My mom

and other seniors will see a \$25 billion cut in Medicare.

What they have in common is that this tax scam will hurt all of them, as opposed to the folks who are the richest among us. The corporations who are doing very, very well, they will see the tax benefits.

This is not a tax plan, it is a tax scam, and our people that we serve deserve better.

CONDEMNING BUREAUCRATS AT CFPB

(Mr. HARRIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to condemn the out-of-control, President Obama-appointed bureaucrats over at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. The CFPB has always been notorious for its questionably illegal agenda, but the agency and its leadership crossed the line last week when its Director, Richard Cordray, resigned.

Before he left, he attempted to circumvent the President's authority by illegally appointing another bureaucrat to replace him. But instead, President Trump, under the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998, appointed Mr. Mick Mulvaney to temporarily head the CFPB.

Instead of allowing Mr. Mulvaney to fill the vacancy and get the CFPB working again, that bureaucrat, Leandra English, with the support of Mr. Cordray, tried to stage a coup against the President and Mr. Mulvaney by taking the President to court.

Mr. Speaker, partisan career bureaucrats will do anything they can to discredit the President and block his policy agenda. This behavior is exactly why President Trump ran for office in the first place. We need to drain the swamp, and let's start with the CFPB.

I applaud our judicial system for upholding the rule of law and confirming Mr. Mulvaney's right to lead the CFPB. We cannot allow petty partisan politics over at CFPB to obstruct our government's ability to govern.

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THE TAX BILL

(Mr. SARBANES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, as Congress careens toward passage of a massive rewrite of our Tax Code, we ought to look at the process that got us here. This tax bill has seen no hearings, no expert testimony, and absolutely no honest efforts to build bipartisan support. This is a terrible shame and the result is a terrible sham.

Who are the ones calling the shots on this tax bill?

The corporate lobbyists and the big money donors who will make out like

bandits. They are the ones who will walk away with a smile on their face and money in their pocket. Meanwhile, millions of hardworking Americans will see their taxes increase under this plan. The latest numbers from the CBO say that 82 million Americans will be worse off.

A good tax plan would be trying to address widening wealth and income inequality in our country. A good tax plan would be seeking to invest in our people and our infrastructure. It would seek to help working families and build up the middle class. But this plan does the opposite.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my Republican colleagues to pull the plug on this tax proposal that is of, by, and for the wealthy and well-connected. We can, and we must, do better for all Americans.

HONORING LARRY EARL ROBERTSON

(Mr. WESTERMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the men and women who deliver the mail in rural America. The work is not easy. As the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association notes, these carriers are essentially post offices on wheels, providing many of the same services to rural residents that urban dwellers take for granted.

One such rural carrier was Larry Earl Robertson from Jessieville, Arkansas. Larry was my mailman for more than 25 years and, as many rural letter carriers throughout our country can attest, he was a part of our family. He knew my wife and children, just as we knew his family. He was an integral part of our community and played an important role in the lives of rural Garland County residents. Simply put, Larry was a friend to everyone. Just as Larry was a friend to all, he was also a faithful Christian and family man.

Through his service—at just 54—he had made an important and lasting impact on his community, as many rural letter carriers do. That is why it was especially sad when we received word of his untimely passing last week. In the pain and grief of death, we take comfort in the words of Christ who said: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live."

May we all strive to do our jobs with diligence and a smile and positively impact our communities as Larry Robertson impacted his.

NET NEUTRALITY

(Mrs. DAVIS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, in a year where we are dealing with healthcare, immigration, and, yes,