

most vulnerable people and their essential benefits.

Linda's outstanding contributions to the agency have been recognized with several awards, including the Deputy Commissioner Citation and the New York Regional Management Society's Regional Office Employee of the Year. She has also been instrumental in helping my own district team from the very beginning.

Throughout Linda's career, she has brought intelligence, technical savvy, practical knowledge, and a strong commitment to excellence to every assignment.

Today my staff, the Social Security Administration, and I thank Linda for her dedication, passion, and commitment to our community.

RECOGNIZING ATLANTICARE

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

Mr. VAN DREW. Madam Speaker, today I want to recognize AtlantiCare, a major health system in south Jersey for over one century. The group started with one hospital in 1898 and has now expanded to over 100 different locations across the region to fulfill the medical needs of our community.

AtlantiCare improves the health and happiness of the people of south Jersey by providing high-quality medical care, which has recently been celebrated with the Critical Care Gold Beacon Award, the Emergency Nurses Association's Lantern Award, and many more.

Beyond health services, AtlantiCare has been a staple to south Jersey because of their focus on community outreach programs, which are so very important. They have tackled a variety of issues facing our area.

AtlantiCare has installed programs to supply healthy school lunches to children, to bring fresh produce to those struggling with food insecurity, and to provide residency opportunities for local medical school students so that they stay in the area.

In south Jersey we are very lucky to have AtlantiCare's accessible medical services and outreach programs to better our region. I thank AtlantiCare and all the staff and all the volunteers for caring about our community in south Jersey.

OUR CHILDREN ARE OUR PRIORITY

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I have worked in the area of criminal justice and juvenile justice for as many years as I have served in the United States Congress.

Dealing with juveniles here in this country and giving them a pathway of opportunity to success has been my dream and goal. I intend to introduce

the Omnibus Juvenile Justice Restoration and Uplift Act.

There are 75 million juveniles, plus, in the United States since 2013. That number has grown. That means that one in four have the possibility of being in the juvenile delinquency system. That should not be tolerated.

My bill will include adding more trained social workers; giving sensitivity training and special training to our law enforcement officers, who really want to be role models; to Ban the Box, so they do not have a lifetime of saying, as a juvenile I was arrested; ending solitary confinement throughout the entire United States for juveniles; alternative sentencing, so that old-fashioned juvenile detention jails can be closed; gang intervention, so that we can find a way for resolution and direction and another way for gang prevention, violence cessation, wrap-around services, closing all juvenile centers over a 10-year period, and finally, conflict resolution.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in introducing this legislation. Our children are our priority.

THE SENATE MUST ACT ON LEGISLATION

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

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the For the People Agenda generated by this House, and I am antithetical to the Senate's provision, which is a for-the-President agenda.

We, the Members of the House, have passed legislation for gun safety. The President has merely talked about it.

We have passed legislation to help with personal and financial security for women. The President says ugly things about women.

We pass legislation that will help the Dreamers. The President is about ending the dream.

We have passed legislation helping those who are being discriminated against in the LGBTQ community. The President ignores this community.

We passed legislation to help with election and democracy security. The President wants to do all that he can to help Putin and those in Russia with their security, ignoring ours.

In our House we have, for the people, passed a bill to increase the minimum wage. The President seems to be antithetical to it. If we have our For the People Agenda and we pass these bills and send them to the Senate, the least that the Senate can do is generate their own version so that these bills may go to a conference committee.

They don't have to have a for-the-President agenda. I am for the people. The Senate is for the President.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. O'HALLERAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of National Rural Health Day.

To mark this important day, my colleagues and I will discuss the unique challenges that rural America faces when seeking quality healthcare close to home or as close to home as rural America has it.

I am proud to represent Arizona's First Congressional District in the House of Representatives. Our district is actually larger than the entire State of Illinois, and it is one of the most rural in the country.

This year, I have held 26 town halls across this vast and diverse district. At each and every one I hear from rural residents struggling to access quality healthcare, especially emergency care. Many of my constituents must spend hours traveling hundreds of miles to access any kind of care, let alone specialist care or maternity care.

Since I was elected, I have worked with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to identify legislative solutions to the issues our rural residents are facing. This year I introduced the CHIME Act, legislation to extend the Community Health Center Fund and the National Health Service Corps for 5 years and increase funding for priority areas.

Community health centers are critical to serve hundreds of thousands of patients every year just in Arizona. In my district, and many rural areas, community health centers are often the primary care facility for a large portion of the population. If funding for community health centers in Arizona were to lapse, just in my district, tens of thousands of rural residents would be left without access to critical care.

My language to extend this funding was included in this week's continuing resolution, but it is at risk of expiring if we cannot come together to fund the government. We need a long-term solution. I will continue to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass this bill into law permanently, so our communities have the support and certainty they need.

Additionally this year, I introduced the GME, graduate medical education amendment, to the Lower Drug Costs

Now Act. My amendment would instruct the Department of Health and Human Services to establish a grant program for hospitals in rural and medically underserved areas. We must act now to ensure that rural communities have the resources they need.

According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, our country will suffer a shortage of over 120,000 physicians by 2032. Rural areas will be hit especially hard. We must do what we can now to prevent this from happening and to mitigate the effects. My amendment would help incentivize doctors to stay and practice in our rural communities. We know very well that, when a resident comes to a rural community or any other community, there is a higher percentage that want to stay in that community after their residency.

This May, after years of work with stakeholders, community leaders, and veterans' advocates, I was able to secure Federal funding for the construction of veterans nursing homes in Flagstaff, in my district, and Yuma in western Arizona. We found out during that time that you can't build a facility like that on Tribal lands, so we have a bill that is trying to change that so the many Tribal nations in our country and nations like the Navajo Nation that are as big as West Virginia can have a nursing center close to the many veterans that they have.

For too long these rural construction projects were unfairly penalized by an outdated VA funding formula that left too many families without the help that they deserve.

□ 1315

We must continue to expand access to healthcare for rural Americans, but I know these are merely first steps. There is much work to be done and many hurdles that must be crossed before we ensure that our veterans, seniors, and families across rural America have access to quality healthcare that is close to home.

Just quickly, rural America is probably tied closer to urban America than many people know. But the families who we need there—who supply the food, the water, the energy, everything that makes urban America survive—won't be there if we don't have people who want to and are able to live there.

That means we have to have good schools, good healthcare, and good job opportunities.

We want our children to move back to rural America, and we will not have that if we do not address the appropriate concerns.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. BRINDISI), my colleague.

Mr. BRINDISI. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. O'HALLERAN), my friend, for yielding to me.

Madam Speaker, I rise in honor of National Rural Health Day.

I am proud to represent a rural district in upstate New York. These are

strong communities of hardworking men and women, but too often, I hear about the challenges facing these families.

I recently heard from farmers at a roundtable about the stress of losing a farm that has been in the family for generations and the barriers to reaching out for help when you are in distress.

Rural Americans too often face long travel times to access healthcare and a lack of adequate resources locally.

Tragically, the CDC reports that the suicide rate in rural America is 45 percent higher than in urban areas.

We need to do better.

That is why I am proud to work with my colleagues Representative KATKO and Representative CRAIG to introduce the Seeding Rural Resilience Act. This bipartisan bill will direct more resources to reduce the stigma around mental healthcare and help connect farmers with available resources.

It shouldn't matter if you live in New Berlin or New York City: You deserve access to quality, affordable healthcare.

It is time for Congress to act to deliver more access to affordable healthcare across our rural communities.

Madam Speaker, I urge consideration and swift passage of my bill and other actions to help address the specific needs of rural Americans.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his remarks.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. VAN DREW).

Mr. VAN DREW. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I am honored to be joined by my colleagues today on National Rural Health Day to express the importance of rural healthcare across America.

Nearly 57 million Americans, or about one out of five, call their communities rural communities, and they call these places their home. That includes many residents of my district in south Jersey.

The State of New Jersey Department of Health defines a rural community as an area within the State that has a population density of fewer than 500 persons per square mile. Most of these areas tend to not only have a lack of healthcare but more need for accessible, affordable care.

The populations in rural communities tend to have more households with people over 65 years of age, many of whom live alone. Additionally, they have higher rates of suicide, cancer, diabetes, asthma, and obesity. Most do not have any health insurance at all.

We must act on health legislation that not only supports the development of community health centers and their accessibility but also finds creative ways to support these rural communities. Ultimately, we will save their lives.

It is important that we address these life-threatening rural health concerns

and foster available and accessible health services for all of these rural Americans.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his comments.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA), my colleague.

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I thank Congressman O'HALLERAN for leading this Blue Dog Special Order on a very important issue affecting rural America.

The Blue Dogs, obviously, represent the breadth and width and diversity of our country, but many of us represent rural areas. Healthcare for every American is a critical need, a critical issue.

In 2010, before the Affordable Care Act became law, in the district that I represent in California, in the San Joaquin Valley, 22 percent of my constituents had no healthcare insurance whatsoever, and 17 percent were underinsured.

The Affordable Care Act has a number of areas where we could provide improvements if we could get bipartisan agreement, but the fact is that we have the ability to protect individuals who have preexisting conditions; children can be on their parents' healthcare insurance until the age of 25; things have really expanded with Medicaid and Medicare; and, what often gets overlooked, \$8 billion was provided in the Affordable Care Act for rural healthcare clinics across America.

What does this mean in my district, a district that represents one of the richest agricultural regions in the entire country and the world? We have gone, in 9 years, from 22 percent underinsured to 10 percent underinsured. We have cut the number of people who have no insurance by more than half. We have reduced the level of those who are underinsured.

In addition, clinics in my area, Camarena, Livingston, Golden Valley, Clinica Sierra, to mention at least four or five, have all expanded their rural healthcare clinics to provide more healthcare for people who live in rural areas, from prenatal to elderly and everything in between.

In addition, they have done innovative things like other clinics across America. They have put healthcare clinics in high schools and middle schools, which has provided greater access to healthcare.

We have made a difference. We have improved the level of healthcare. But the reality is this: For three decades, the number of hospitals in rural areas in our country has declined at a steep pace. Among the 50 rural hospitals in California, more than a dozen have closed since the early 2000s.

It also has been devastating not only to the level of healthcare but to the residents who live in those communities, hardworking people who contribute to our economy every day, part of our farm communities.

I think it is important to note that for every 1,000 people in the place I

live, we have 0.9 physicians. Anywhere else in California, for every 1,000 people, there are 2.2 physicians, twice as many physicians.

While this is an important part of improving healthcare, we also need to get medical schools. That is something that I have worked on. I have worked on trying to get additional medical schools not only across the country but in the San Joaquin Valley.

We know that if you get a medical school there, it provides an opportunity for students who graduate from that medical school to practice in the area in which they have graduated.

We have proof of that. We have residency programs that I have been very supportive of with the University of California, San Francisco, UCSF, which has over 280 residents who are being trained in the valley right now. Over half of those physicians over the last 40 years who have graduated from that residency program have stayed to practice in our valley. So a medical school is an important part of an overall strategy.

As Blue Dogs, we want to continue to support expanded healthcare throughout our rural areas. This is something I believe Democrats and Republicans can come together on in a bipartisan manner.

These are many ways in which we can work to ensure that rural America gets reliable, affordable healthcare that they deserve, like every other American. That is why Blue Dogs are speaking out on this issue today.

Since taking office, this administration, sadly, has made repeated efforts to eliminate the Affordable Care Act without putting anything in its place. That makes no sense. That makes no sense whatsoever.

Just this week, we voted on a continuing resolution to keep government open for the next 6 weeks. We should have a real budget in place at this time. It is irresponsible to ever, as the President did earlier this year, shut down government. But in this continuing resolution, we have funding to ensure that our community health centers keep receiving the funding they need to stay open and serve their patients.

This year alone, Congress has voted on 10 different proposals to improve healthcare and stabilize the Affordable Care Act for American families. They are over in the Senate right now. Sadly, instead of taking action, Senator MITCH MCCONNELL refuses to bring up these good measures.

We could be lowering the cost of prescription drugs, which affects all Americans, whether you live in rural areas or urban areas, and ensuring that we protect those who have preexisting conditions, preexisting conditions of heart disease, cancer, diabetes.

These bills, sadly, are collecting dust on the majority leader's desk.

I want to close by saying, as a 15-year member of the Blue Dog Coalition, our caucus stands together to try to improve healthcare for all Americans.

For those of us who represent rural America, like Congressman O'HALLERAN, myself, and many others, it is important to note that we must improve our healthcare system for the people who live in our rural areas.

It is time for the Senate to do their job and pass these important bills.

We will continue to work to try to expand access to healthcare in rural areas with our clinics and to create medical schools in areas that are significantly underserved.

While we continue to patiently ask the Senate to act, I know the Blue Dogs will continue to advocate for policies that improve access to healthcare for all Americans, especially for those rural Americans we represent.

Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his leadership in this important area as the legislative chair for the Blue Dog caucus. The citizens of Arizona are fortunate to have a good Representative.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Madam Speaker, California is, too.

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman again, and I wish him a happy Thanksgiving.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Madam Speaker, I thank all of my colleagues for joining me to participate in this important show of support by the Blue Dog caucus for rural healthcare and access across America today.

A couple of quick examples: First of all, when you are traveling across the country from urban America through rural America, this hospital issue, this medical issue, is your issue because the hospitals that we have are the hospitals you are going to be taken to. The ambulances that have to take an hour or 2 hours to get to the site where you are at are the ambulances that you are going to be taking, too.

People on dialysis in rural America, whether it is a Tribal community or another community in rural America, some of them have to drive 2 hours one way to get their treatment and then 2 hours back home. Sometimes they do 3 days a week, sometimes up to 4 days a week, sick people traveling hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of miles to get this type of treatment so they can live.

Cancer is the same way. Cancer patients have to find a way to get that treatment. It is very scarce in rural America.

Rural communities make up the very fabric of America. Their success is our Nation's success.

I am committed to fighting to improve access to healthcare for rural, Tribal, and other underserved communities, for hardworking families and veterans who often travel hundreds of miles for basic care.

As I stated before, my district is rural for the most part, and we have 60,000 veterans within the district.

For rural healthcare to be totally successful, we must improve broadband and expand it so that telemedicine is meaningful for the people who live in rural areas across America.

Improving access to care is not a partisan issue. We must come together across the aisle and continue to work to identify legislative solutions to the barriers our rural residents face.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

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

H. Con. Res. 75. Concurrent resolution directing the Clerk of the House of Representatives to make a correction in the enrollment of H.R. 3055.

The message also announced that the Senate agrees to the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 3055) "An Act making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2020, and for other purposes."

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GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. Madam Speaker, today I rise to mark Global Entrepreneurship Week, where all across the globe cities will be hosting events that will inspire millions to explore their potential as an entrepreneur while fostering connections and increasing collaborations within their communities.

Small businesses and entrepreneurs are the engines of our economy in Arkansas and across our country. They support millions of jobs in this Nation. They create and support jobs within their local communities and employ approximately half the private-sector workers in the United States.

As a co-chairman and founder of the House Entrepreneurship Caucus, I am proud to celebrate the visionary men and women who boldly pursue their passion to build the growth businesses that fuel our economy.

The United States has served as a global beacon of innovation, delivering remarkable new products and services that improve the lives of all Americans. Today, over 99 percent of U.S. employers are small businesses that create 57 million jobs that generate 44 percent of our economic activity.

The spirit of the startup is built into our American DNA. Our country is home to the world's greatest inventions, companies, and technological advances because we believe that anyone with a good idea and determination can build a business that changes the world.