

Mr. Speaker, I serve a veterans hospital in southern Ohio, the Chillicothe VA Hospital. I have been told by administration there that the average veteran who gets prescription drugs at that facility will get 10 or more prescriptions per month. If we take a \$7 co-pay and multiply that by 10, it is \$70, a sizable amount of money for a veteran living on a fixed income. These veterans frequently get not 1-month supply, but a 3-month supply at a time. If we take \$70 times 3, it is \$210. Why is it that we talk so eloquently in this House about our concern for our military, we honor our veterans, and yet when it comes to taking action, we penalize them at the same time we are willing to give huge, huge tax cuts to profitable corporations, many of them multi-national corporations.

A 250 percent increase on our veterans for medicines they need to stay healthy or maybe even to stay alive, and we are doing it at a time when we are passing out money up here like drunken sailors. We have passed so many give-backs and pork barrel spending bills in this session of this House of Representatives, and yet we are penalizing our veterans. It is no wonder that veterans across this country have a right to say when it comes to the actions of this House, talk is cheap, but actions speak louder than words.

On February 4 when veterans go to our VA facilities to get their medicines, and they have been used to pay \$2 per prescription and they are asked to pay \$7 for that prescription, I hope they rebel. I hope they let those of us in this Chamber know how they feel about this outrageous action.

Mr. Speaker, I have introduced a bill to place a 5-year moratorium on any increase for veterans' prescription drugs. My bill is H.R. 2820. I currently have 42 cosponsors. I am hopeful that every Member of this Chamber will choose to cosponsor this legislation, and as soon as we get back here after the first of the year, we will pass this legislation so that we will not penalize our veterans and require them to pay more than they are currently paying for their needed prescription medications.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF FIRST SESSION OF 107TH CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the accomplish-

ments of the first session of the 107th Congress. I am proud of this House of Representatives and how it has risen to the challenges of this very turbulent year.

We started this session after the closest Presidential election in our Nation's history, with an evenly divided Senate and a closely divided House. We conclude it with an admirable track record of accomplishments in the face of a Nation that has utterly changed in a time of war. The themes we focused on at the beginning—economic security, retirement security, national security, and education—still occupy our attention at the end.

We started this session debating economic security. Should we take the steps necessary to jump-start our economy? The Congress, amid great debate, considered the President's campaign pledge to return \$1.35 trillion of the taxpayers' money to the taxpayers themselves. We started in the House with the principle that it is wrong to penalize married people with a higher tax rate. We passed legislation to get rid of the marriage penalty. We believed it was wrong to tax people when they die, so we got rid of the death tax. We believed that all Americans deserved some tax relief, so we passed broad, across-the-board tax relief, which included a refund check for all Americans who pay income taxes.

We believed that families needed help to raise their kids and to send their kids to school. We doubled the child tax credit from \$500 to \$1,000 to give parents more money at home to take care of diapers and school supplies and braces and all the other things that kids need. We also passed tax-free education savings accounts to encourage parents to save money for their children's education. To improve retirement security, we included monumental IRA/401(k) reform so that people could save more money tax-free for their retirement.

Tax relief is the best remedy for a slowing economy, and there is no question in my mind that we did the right thing by passing the tax relief package early enough to soften what could have been an even greater economic blow to our country. The President signed this legislation on June 7. He kept his promise to the American people, and we kept our commitment to economic security. But tax relief was not our only accomplishment in this historic session of this Congress.

The President promised to work on a bipartisan basis to reform education, to improve our education system so that no child is left behind. As a former teacher and coach, I understand how important education is to our Nation's future and how complicated school reform truly is.

We worked on legislation that would do the following: children from the third to eighth grades would be tested annually in such important subjects as reading and mathematics so that we could make sure that they are learn-

ing. States and school districts will have more freedom to decide the most effective way to spend Federal dollars. And they will be held accountable for their decisions. Federal funds will be put in the programs that have the most positive impact on children, programs, for instance, that make sure that all our kids are reading by the third grade. Parents will be empowered with information about the quality of their children's schools and their teachers so that parents can make the best decisions for their kids' education. And parents with children in failing schools will be able to use Federal funds to pay for private, religious, or community-based after-school tutoring.

Last week, the House passed the conference report and the Senate completed its work and the President will sign this legislation in early January. From the beginning, we planned on tax relief and educational reform. But the Congress showed it was able to respond to an immediate crisis.

On September 11, the American people were deliberately and viciously attacked by terrorists who hijacked four airplanes, crashing two of them into the World Trade Towers, one of them into the Pentagon. The fourth crashed into a field in Pennsylvania after a heroic struggle by crew and passengers that led to the crash of that airplane. Many of us believe that the terrorists planned to crash that plane into this very Capitol of the United States of America. Those people who stopped those terrorists from their dastardly deed did a great service not only to the people who work here, the people who serve here, but certainly to the American people themselves. We hold those deeds in the greatest and highest honor that I think this country can bestow.

This disaster changed the character of Congress and the face of this Nation. I am proud of how this House has reacted. From the moment we sang "God Bless America" on the steps of the Capitol building, we sent the message to the world that we are united in fighting this new war on terrorism. We immediately got to work on a series of initiatives to go after these murderers and safeguard our Nation from future attacks.

Three days after the attack, Congress passed a bill providing \$40 billion to fund September 11 recovery efforts and to combat terrorism. On the same day, we passed a resolution authorizing the President to use force against those who played a role in these attacks.

In the days that followed, we passed legislation vitally important to fighting this new war and in protecting America from further attack:

An airline recovery bill to help those airlines struggling after the attack on our Nation.

An antiterrorism bill to provide our law enforcement officials with the tools they need to track terrorists and bring them to justice.

An aviation security bill to improve safety at our country's airports for travelers and airport employees.