

were told that it would create jobs immediately. It would hold unemployment below 8 percent. Well, unemployment is now 9.5 percent. It's the worst in 26 years.

Almost 2 million people have lost their jobs since the so-called stimulus bill passed. And yet, the President just said, It's done its job. This weekend, he said the stimulus was "working exactly as we anticipated."

With all due respect to the President of the United States and my Democrat colleagues, the stimulus bill is not working. And the American people know it. The American people deserve a recovery plan that will create real jobs and real recovery—and that's fiscal discipline in Washington, D.C., and tax relief for working families, small businesses, and family farms.

□ 1230

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, the cost and inefficiency of our health care system is embarrassing. It is the only word. American families pay \$1,100 extra every year through their health insurance premiums to fund care for the patients who are unable to pay their hospital bills. The U.S. meanwhile ranks 42nd in the world in life expectancy, and the overuse of invasive medical procedures is dangerous to many. Unexpected health care expenses is the leading cause of bankruptcy amongst American families.

The system is bankrupting the Government of the United States, of Connecticut and of the other 49 States. We have got to get this reform right. It is critical to American families, to fiscal prudence, and to the future of this country. It won't be easy, but inaction is simply not an option.

CREDIT CARD CONGRESS

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

Mr. CHAFFETZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with grave concern about this "credit card Congress." Every problem seems to come with a spending plan, and no amount of money seems to be enough.

The national deficit is our annual discrepancy between tax revenue and public expenditures. We just exceeded the \$1 trillion deficit mark for this year, and we still have a long way to go this year. Our national debt is the cumulative amount of money the American people owe; and over the course of the past Congresses, it, too, has skyrocketed.

As of June 30, the national debt stood at \$11.5 trillion. During the month of June, the national debt increased by over \$223 billion. The government spent

over \$18 billion in interest payments in just the month of June. That is \$600 million a day.

Because the Congress did not have the self-discipline to spend less than it took in, \$600 million of your money is going out the door in interest payments. We can no longer afford to run Congress on a credit card.

H.R. 2738

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

Mr. TEAGUE. Mr. Speaker, during the 4th of July recess, I traveled home to visit with constituents and speak with them about their problems and find ways in which we could help them.

As is often the case, my constituents continue to inspire me with their willingness to take on hard challenges and help their family and neighbors in need. Many throughout my district volunteer their time to drive veterans to medical appointments, even though the drive can last over 3 or 4 hours. It is tough, but oftentimes it is what needs to be done for a veteran needing medical services.

That is why I have introduced H.R. 2738, a bill that would direct the Secretary of the VA to reimburse family caregivers of disabled veterans for travel expenses, including lodging and food, when they take vets for appointments and treatments. Rural veterans face too many obstacles when seeking medical treatment, and I believe this legislation will make their lives a little easier and help get them the care that they need. We made a lot of promises to our veterans, and it's about time we begin to honor them.

I hope that my colleagues will support this very important piece of legislation, and I urge its passage.

STRENGTHENING AMERICA'S HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

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

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, as Congress takes on the essential task of strengthening our health care system, we have an extraordinary opportunity here to do something good and right for the American people. While the challenges before us are multiple, shifting the health care paradigm from a system that treats the symptoms of sickness and disease to one that promotes life-long wellness and prevention for all Americans would be a very good and meaningful start.

The current health care debate, which focuses on a loosely defined, government-operated "public option," has yet to address several underlying complexities within our system. But the essential question here is really simple: How do we improve health outcomes and reduce costs while protecting vulnerable persons? A thorough policy de-

bate must be grounded in these cornerstone objectives to effectively improve the quality of and access to health care for all Americans, or else we are simply discussing a new government-financing mechanism without regard to unsustainable cost projections.

RECOGNIZING HARLAN AND CHARLIE STOKES

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

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor the actions of two brave men from my district, Mr. Harlan Stokes and his son Charlie.

Last August, Harlan, an Eagle Scout himself, and Charlie, who was well on his way to earning his Eagle Scout rank, set out to conquer Longs Peak in the Rocky Mountain National Park. Little did they know they would need all of their scout training before the day was done.

As the two reached the top of the mountain, a powerful storm hit, bringing with it gale-force winds, rain and hail. Harlan and Charlie quickly headed down the mountain; but as they went down, they found other less prepared hikers. Bravely staying to help, they gathered those they had found and ran for shelter in a nearby cave. Over the next 2 hours, the father-son duo selflessly cared for 23 hikers while they themselves began to suffer from hypothermia.

As a result of their courageous actions, all 23 hikers made it off the mountain safely. To honor their heroism, the two were awarded one of the Boy Scouts' most prestigious awards, the National Medal of Merit.

Today we salute their bravery and honor their selflessness. Harlan and Charlie's story exemplifies the qualities of the Boy Scouts of America and represents the best that America has to offer.

GOVERNMENT INTRUSION INTO THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

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

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, Americans are hurting because of the high cost of health care. I am a medical doctor. We need to fix the system. It is affecting everybody. It is health care financing that is the problem. Why are health care expenses so high?

In my rural south Georgia medical practice, I had a lab. Congress passed a bill called CLIA, the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act, that shut down my lab. Prior to being shut down, if a patient came to see me with a red, sore throat and running a fever, I would do a CBC, a complete blood count, to see if they had a bacterial infection and thus needed antibiotics, or a viral infection where antibiotics are not going