

TIGHTENING FISCAL BELT

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

Mr. ARCURI. Mr. Speaker, during these tough economic times, American families have been forced to cut back and tighten their financial belts. It is time that Congress do the same and set an example for the rest of the Federal Government.

That is why I have introduced the Congressional Belt Tightening Act of 2010, which would cut our salaries as Members of Congress and our office budgets by 5 percent next year. Last year, my office tightened its financial belt and returned more than 8 percent of our official office budget to the Treasury for deficit reduction.

Additionally, we should pass legislation that requires votes on pay raises every year, no more automatic pay raises. My bill would require an up-or-down vote on all salary increases indefinitely. If Members think they are deserving of a pay raise, they will have to vote on it or answer to the American people.

Congress cannot seriously talk about reining in spending in Washington and working to decrease our Nation's debt if we are not willing to do it ourselves.

GEERT WILDERS IS PROSECUTED AND PERSECUTED FOR FREE SPEECH

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

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, freedom of speech continues to be shouted down by the politically correct police. In the Netherlands, it is against the law to say something that offends someone else's religion.

That is why Dutch lawmaker Geert Wilders is on trial for hurting people's feelings. He made a movie about terrorists and radical Islamic clerics encouraging violence in the name of hate. Now he is on trial for insulting Islam. He is charged with discrimination and incitement to hatred. Because Dutch law is intolerant of intolerance.

The Dutch courts say even truthful insult speech is a crime. Sounds like the law has become the enemy of free speech and a protector of radicals.

Geert Wilders boldly brings to the world's attention the dangers of religious radicals who believe in hateful violence, and he gets in trouble for it. He ought to be commended rather than condemned and charged with a crime. Freedom of speech is a universal human right, granted by God, especially if that speech is political, religious, or truthful. A free people won't tolerate intolerance for freedom for very long.

And that's just the way it is.

HONORING WOMEN IN PENNSYLVANIA'S LEGISLATURE

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

Mrs. DAHLKEMPER. Mr. Speaker, March is Women's History Month, and this year will be the 90th anniversary of the adoption of the 19th Amendment. Yet after nine decades, the United States ranks only 74th out of 187 countries for the percentage of women in Federal legislature, with only 17 percent as Members of Congress that are female.

In my home State of Pennsylvania, only 14 percent of the general assembly are women. For Women's History Month, I would like to recognize the women of my district who serve in the Pennsylvania General Assembly: State Senators Jane Earll, Jane Clare Orie and Mary Jo White; and State Representatives Michele Brooks, Donna Oberlander, and Kathy Rapp.

I am proud so many women represent western Pennsylvania in Harrisburg. It is my hope that women in Pennsylvania and across this country will be inspired to seek office at the local, State, and Federal level.

START OVER ON HEALTH CARE

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, here are the results of a new Investor's Business Daily public opinion poll about health care, and if you look at the chart right here, you will see those results.

Asked if Congress should pass the current health care bill or start over, respondents said "start fresh" by a 2 to 1 ratio, by 61 percent to 32 percent, start over.

For Independents, the split was 65 percent to only 24 percent.

On using the budget reconciliation process to circumvent a Senate filibuster to help pass the bill, 51 percent were opposed and 35 percent in favor.

Independents disliked the idea by 57 percent to 29 percent, with 39 percent opposing it strongly.

By 41 percent to 27 percent, Americans were more likely to oppose than support lawmakers who voted for the current health care reform bill.

The American people are right: Congress should listen, start over, and do it right.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

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

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, Anthem Blue Cross in my district of California has requested raising premiums by 39 percent.

If we do nothing, the American people will continue to pay higher premiums and higher out-of-pocket costs

now and in the future. And the insurance companies will continue to control the high cost of health care. A step-by-step approach is not enough, and it is not the answer, especially for the 219,000 families in my district without coverage, and with a 14 percent unemployment rate.

Health care reform holds the insurance companies accountable, ends discrimination based on preexisting conditions, cuts and eventually closes the doughnut hole for thousands of seniors, including 5,200 in seniors in my district, expands coverage for 31 million Americans who do not have health care coverage, and cuts the national deficit by \$100 billion over the next 10 years.

Health care reform must make insurance more affordable, providing the largest middle class cut for health care in history, reducing the premium costs for tens of millions of families and small business owners who are priced out of coverage today. I ask us to support health care reform.

COMMENDING GREEN MOUNTAIN CLUB

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

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 100th anniversary of the Long Trail in Vermont, and to honor the Green Mountain Club for creating, maintaining, and preserving this national treasure.

Founded March 11, 1910, by James P. Taylor, the Green Mountain Club has been dedicated to, in Taylor's words, "making the Vermont mountains play a larger part in the life of the people."

In the past century, Taylor's dream has become a reality as seasoned hikers have taken to the trail, traversing the peaks and valleys of Vermont. From Massachusetts to Canada, they have hiked the spine of the Green Mountains, some for a day and some for the length of the 237-mile beautiful trail. And in the process, they have gained an appreciation for the glory of Vermont and the importance of stewardship and conservation.

I commend members of the Green Mountain Club, and I wish them another 100 years of success.

BROKEN HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

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

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, yesterday Jewish Hospital in my home town of Louisville, Kentucky, was forced to lay off 250 workers and announced plans to eliminate a total of 500 jobs. These hardworking people who played by the rules now, through no fault of their own, must figure out a new way to provide for their families.

Here are the reasons the CEO gave for the layoffs: "With 900,000 Kentuckians now without health insurance, we are experiencing a perfect storm of declining volumes and increasing levels of uncompensated care."

To my colleagues who argue health care should be scrapped and focus given to jobs and the economy, I urge you to note this tragic situation and understand: Health care is all about jobs and the economy.

To my Senator and constituent, MITCH MCCONNELL, who keeps saying we should start over and take our time, 250 Louisvillians, your constituents and mine, Senator, are the ones who are now starting over.

Louisville is anything but alone in this crisis, and the unemployed workers in my community are far from the only casualties of this failed system. I urge my colleagues to directly address our struggling economy and high unemployment without delay by working together to reform our broken health care system.

JOB CREATION IS THE KEY

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

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, during the 111th Congress, Democrats have taken numerous measures to restore our Nation's fiscal health. Job creation is an essential element of this financial recovery.

We have passed the Small Business Financing and Investment Act, which will make it more affordable for small businesses to get loans and will save or create 1.3 million jobs annually.

We have passed the American Clean Energy and Security Act, which will create millions of jobs and also provide skilled training for workers.

We passed the Jobs for Main Street Act out of the House, which has targeted investment for job training, small businesses, affordable housing, school renovation, hiring teachers, and much more.

At the very beginning of this session, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was signed into law, and this legislation has saved or created nearly 2 million jobs. The Recovery Act was the largest middle class tax cut in history, and has helped to provide over 300,000 jobs in the education sector.

As the weather gets warmer, thousands of infrastructure jobs will be created through Recovery Act funds to build bridges, roads, and rails.

Additionally, community health centers around the country are being created through Recovery Act funding.

I ask all of my friends to continue to support job creation.

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DO HEALTH INSURANCE COMPANIES REALLY CARE ABOUT YOU?

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

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, as you know, the people in southern Nevada have been hit hard during these tough

economic times, caused largely by unbridled corporate greed and complicitous government action during the 8 years of the Bush administration. We have the highest foreclosure rate in the country, second highest unemployment rate, and we are one of the highest States for rates of uninsured.

People are struggling every day just to keep body and soul together. But do the insurance companies care? No, no, they don't. They continue to raise premiums up 39 percent in some States while making record profits and handing out obscene bonuses. They finance thousands of lobbyists to come to the Hill to argue against meaningful reform, and they brag about the millions that they are spending on television and radio ads that are filled with lies and distortions aimed at confusing and scaring the people, especially seniors.

So I ask the folks in District Three and beyond: Next time you see or hear one of those ads on TV or the radio, ask yourself, are the insurance companies concerned more about you or more about protecting and growing their bottom line?

HEALTH CARE REFORM NOW

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

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, as we've heard this morning, in the last month this country has been subjected to jaw-dropping increases of health insurance rates—39 percent in California, over 20 percent in the State of Connecticut. Small businesses and the self-employed are being asked to make a choice between jobs and paying for health care. But it is not just limited to small businesses. School districts that are now putting together their school budgets are getting increases. In the State of Connecticut, 14 percent increase in Coventry, 16 percent in Old Saybrook, 18 percent in Clinton, 21 percent in Plainfield, and 25 percent in Waterford.

For school districts who cannot afford their budgets because of the bad economy, they are now going to be forced with making choices between laying off teachers, closing schools, forcing our kids into bigger school classrooms, or paying for health insurance.

For those who say start over, the insurance companies aren't going to start over. These school districts have to make decisions now, and it is time for this Congress to make a decision now to reform our health care system, protect our school districts, and help small businesses who are getting killed with these rate increases.

IMPEACHING JUDGE G. THOMAS PORTEOUS, JR.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on the Judiciary, I call up House Resolution 1031

and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1031

Resolved, That G. Thomas Porteous, Jr., a judge of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana, is impeached for high crimes and misdemeanors, and that the following articles of impeachment be exhibited to the Senate:

Articles of impeachment exhibited by the House of Representatives of the United States of America in the name of itself and all of the people of the United States of America, against G. Thomas Porteous, Jr., a judge in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana, in maintenance and support of its impeachment against him for high crimes and misdemeanors.

ARTICLE I

G. Thomas Porteous, Jr., while a Federal judge of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana, engaged in a pattern of conduct that is incompatible with the trust and confidence placed in him as a Federal judge, as follows:

Judge Porteous, while presiding as a United States district judge in Lifemark Hospitals of Louisiana, Inc. v. Liljeberg Enterprises, denied a motion to recuse himself from the case, despite the fact that he had a corrupt financial relationship with the law firm of Amato & Creely, P.C. which had entered the case to represent Liljeberg. In denying the motion to recuse, and in contravention of clear canons of judicial ethics, Judge Porteous failed to disclose that beginning in or about the late 1980s while he was a State court judge in the 24th Judicial District Court in the State of Louisiana, he engaged in a corrupt scheme with attorneys, Jacob Amato, Jr., and Robert Creely, whereby Judge Porteous appointed Amato's law partner as a "curator" in hundreds of cases and thereafter requested and accepted from Amato & Creely a portion of the curatorship fees which had been paid to the firm. During the period of this scheme, the fees received by Amato & Creely amounted to approximately \$40,000, and the amounts paid by Amato & Creely to Judge Porteous amounted to approximately \$20,000.

Judge Porteous also made intentionally misleading statements at the recusal hearing intended to minimize the extent of his personal relationship with the two attorneys. In so doing, and in failing to disclose to Lifemark and its counsel the true circumstances of his relationship with the Amato & Creely law firm, Judge Porteous deprived the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals of critical information for its review of a petition for a writ of mandamus, which sought to overrule Judge Porteous's denial of the recusal motion. His conduct deprived the parties and the public of the right to the honest services of his office.

Judge Porteous also engaged in corrupt conduct after the Lifemark v. Liljeberg bench trial, and while he had the case under advisement, in that he solicited and accepted things of value from both Amato and his law partner Creely, including a payment of thousands of dollars in cash. Thereafter, and without disclosing his corrupt relationship with the attorneys of Amato & Creely PLC or his receipt from them of cash and other things of value, Judge Porteous ruled in favor of their client, Liljeberg.

By virtue of this corrupt relationship and his conduct as a Federal judge, Judge Porteous brought his court into scandal and disrepute, prejudiced public respect for, and confidence in, the Federal judiciary, and