

friends as General Mik, for his lasting commitment to our Nation's military and veterans.

After 27 years of active duty in the Air Force, General Mik returned to Charleston, where he served as chairman of the Charleston Chamber of Commerce's Military Affairs Committee. In 2005, he was diagnosed with ALS. At that time, the disease was not recognized as a service-connected disorder by the VA. Because of the high incidence rate among veterans, General Mik worked tirelessly with me, the entire VA Committee, and General Peake to change VA regulations to make ALS a presumptive disease. He also played an instrumental role in the establishment of the National ALS Registry.

Because of his valiant efforts, no veteran will ever have to fight for disability after they have been diagnosed with ALS. General Mik always put service to our country and his fellow countrymen first, and he will be greatly missed.

FINANCIAL REGULATORY REFORM

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

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, when I recently visited a restaurant in my rural district, a gentleman approached me to say that he was a Republican and had never voted for a Democrat, but he voted for President Obama. He stated his appreciation that the President was standing up to greed, that he was standing up to Wall Street and corporate America. He felt that corporate greed is among the greatest challenges facing our Nation, and he is absolutely correct.

The first day President Obama took office, the country was at the brink of economic ruin triggered by financial deregulation and banks that pursued reckless investments to produce quick profits. Wall Street was acting more like casinos than banks, taking big gambles, and when they lost, forcing the taxpayers to pay. They got rich, everyone else got squeezed.

Democrats have a solution. Wall Street doesn't like it, but we have a solution. We want transparency, we want accountability, and we will not stop until that happens.

□ 1015

WE CAN DO BETTER

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

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor this morning with a simple message: we can do better. Just look around.

What has been accomplished under the Democratic leadership? A takeover of our health care system, otherwise known as ObamaCare, which spends money we don't have, without lowering

the cost of health care. A cap-and-tax energy bill which would cost the average American family an additional \$3,000 annually for the energy. And, of course, the failed stimulus legislation costing \$861 billion that has yet to create a single non-government job, leaving our unemployment rate at an abysmal 9.7 percent.

Now the Senate is considering a permanent bailout for Wall Street, and the President's top economic adviser is pushing for a European-style value added tax on top of our current tax system.

Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve better than they're currently getting, and House Republicans have a commonsense solution that will create jobs, lower the tax burden for American families, and stop spending money that we don't have.

HONORING EARTH DAY

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

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, this week we celebrate Earth Day. Since its inception following the tragic oil spill off Santa Barbara, Earth Day has become a call to action on behalf of the environment.

As one who represents this coastline, one of the most beautiful and sensitive areas in America, I know that every day is Earth Day. But the important thing about this year's celebration is that it marks a turning point for our Nation. Under Democratic leadership our country is finally poised to begin addressing our longstanding energy issues.

Through the Recovery Act, for example, we've launched a clean energy economy that's creating millions of jobs, reducing our dependence on dirty energy sources, and, through efficiencies, lowering energy costs for American families and businesses.

Now is the time to seize the unprecedented opportunity before us. The clean energy legislation we've passed in this Chamber will be the legacy we leave for our children and our grandchildren. To protect them and all who come after us, we must continue making these smart investments and meet the challenges of the 21st century.

STOP THE ENDLESS BAILOUTS

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, beginning in the fall of 2008, Congress approved, and the Bush and Obama administrations began to hand out taxpayer money freely to banks and, eventually, auto companies, with little transparency and, in some cases, little hope that the money would be repaid.

Now, the Senate is set to consider legislation that will create a perma-

nent culture of bailouts on Wall Street. The legislation moves us away from sending failed companies into bankruptcy and toward government-managed bailouts. There would be a different set of rules for the largest firms, rules that create a perverse incentive for these companies to take risks, rules that encourage lower rates for the largest firms because of the implicit government guarantee. Ultimately, we would be creating a dozen new Fannies and Freddie's, not reforming a broken system of government oversight.

I think the American people have had enough of bailouts. The Dodd bill creates an endless cycle of failure where Wall Street bankers are the only ones who come out ahead. It should be stopped.

AN INJUSTICE TO AMERICAN WORKERS AND TAXPAYERS

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

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor to speak against a significant injustice to both American workers and the American taxpayer, and that is the decision by the Air Force to extend the deadline for offering bids for the Air Force's new imperative tanker, which has allowed an illegally subsidized competitor, the EADS Company, which has now taken advantage of that, to the disadvantage of American workers and the disadvantage of American taxpayers. It is inconceivable to me that we have extended this deadline to allow a competitor to offer a bid that will be illegally subsidized by European governments.

If this travesty is allowed to happen, we could lose thousands of jobs. The taxpayers would have been suffering seeing these illegal subsidies, and a great injustice will have been perpetrated.

This cannot stand. We should continue to fight this grave injustice.

RESTORING U.S. COMPETITIVENESS

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

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, our country is on an unsustainable path with trillion-dollar deficits annually, continued massive government spending, and an atmosphere of uncertainty as President Obama and congressional Democrats have enacted \$760 million in gross new tax increases since 2009, with more tax increases planned. It's no wonder that unemployment remains stubbornly high and economic growth is sluggish. These policies are a threat to U.S. competitiveness.

We need a commonsense policy to promote growth. We need to cut government spending and adhere to a balanced budget. We need to increase U.S.