

There is no time like the present to begin, again, the debate about violence in our society. I intend to facilitate this debate with a proposal I will soon bring forward.

JUSTICE FOR LAULI'I

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 24, 2011

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I recently introduced a private bill (H.R. 354) on behalf of a remarkable young man, Lauli'i Matu'u.

Lauli'i was born deaf and was abandoned by his birth-family in Western Samoa. Lauli'i lived on the streets until age 10 when Greg Lewis, a U.S. citizen, took him in, taught him sign language, and cared for his medical needs. In 1992, Mr. Lewis was appointed as legal guardian to Lauli'i, but it took 14 years before Greg was finally able to bring Lauli'i to the U.S. Lauli'i is in danger of being deported because his humanitarian visa has expired. Lauli'i has no family or ties to Western Samoa, deporting Lauli'i would be a travesty of justice! My bill will grant Lauli'i permanent U.S. residence.

REPEALING THE JOB-KILLING
HEALTH CARE LAW ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. JEFF FLAKE

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 19, 2011

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support H.R. 2, legislation repealing the massive health care law passed last year.

Obamacare creates an unfunded mandate for states that took federal stimulus funds for Medicaid.

This unfunded mandate will cost states like Arizona hundreds of millions of dollars.

It also ties their hands from changing their Medicaid programs to prevent them from becoming unaffordable.

States must be allowed to tailor their programs as they see fit in order to ensure their long-term sustainability.

There are claims that repealing Obamacare would lead to massive deficits because it is supposedly paid for, but I would like to point out one item that was intended to raise revenues in order to help pay for the health care law that is already facing repeal.

The healthcare bill includes a requirement that small businesses file a report every time they spend more than \$600.

This filing requirement went into effect at the end of last year and I am among a considerable bipartisan effort seeking to repeal it.

Time and time again, we pass a law that is supposedly paid for . . . only to find out that the supposed pay-fors aren't worth the paper on which they were written.

Sadly, when all of the budget gimmicks and fiscal hijinx are accounted for, provisions like these in Obamacare aren't paid for at all.

In fact, the House Budget Committee Chairman recently noted that the true cost of Obamacare to taxpayers is more than \$700 billion.

Mr. Speaker, I agree that something must be done about the rising costs of health care, but Obamacare is not the answer.

This is a bad law: we need to just start over and enact healthcare reforms that improve quality and control costs.

TRIBUTE TO STEVE HAMANN, EL
CAJON 2010 CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 24, 2011

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, it's with a profound sense of appreciation and respect that I rise today to acknowledge the contribution of Steve Hamann to the San Diego community. Steve was recently named 2010 Citizen of the Year for the city of El Cajon, which I am proud to represent in Congress. Each of the candidates in the running for Citizen of the Year would have been an excellent choice, but Steve's tireless work and charity on behalf of so many others puts him in a class by himself.

Anyone who knows Steve understands that his purpose is not derived from self-motivation. His commitment to helping others showcases his good nature and moral character, demonstrated through more than 16 years of charity work, where he raised millions of dollars for numerous causes. All of it on donated time and without compensation—a mark of true dedication and purpose.

Such an extraordinary level of involvement is why Steven is known around East County San Diego as the "Auctioneer Extraordinaire." He has spent countless hours hosting events each year—more than 80 in one year, in fact—and, thankfully for all us, he shows no sign of slowing down anytime soon. A member of the Rotary Club of El Cajon, Steve embodies the Rotarian motto of "Service above Self."

The list of organizations Steve lends his time and efforts to support is long, but certainly worth noting. He is well known for his work with the Boys and Girls Clubs of East County, Stoney's Kids, St. Madeleine Sophie's Center, the East County Salvation Army, The East County Chamber of Commerce, the El Cajon Community Development Center, the El Cajon Elks Lodge, the Heartland Boy Scouts, the Cajon Valley Union School District, the Grossmont Union High School District, the Grossmont Cuyamaca College District, the Mother Goose Parade, the Home of Guiding Hands, the El Cajon Recreation Department, the East County YMCA, the Grossmont Hospital Foundation and the Olaf Wieghorst Museum.

Aside from his sterling reputation, I got to better know Steve as the moderator for the East County Chamber of Commerce's Congressional Debates. The one thing about Steve in this setting is that he has always been as firm as he has been fair, demonstrating his objectivity while asking tough questions that help better inform community residents about their choices entering election season. Steve is also Editor-in-Chief for the East County Herald newspaper, where he focuses on promoting most of El Cajon's events and featuring those events in quality photo series. This is just one more service to the community that Steve provides.

Many San Diegans, as do most Americans, often wonder if they are making a difference in their communities or do enough to help influence the lives of others. Steve is a good example of someone who should never have to wonder whether they are making an impact. The evidence is in his work, hours dedicated and results. Steve serves as an excellent example to others too, reminding us all that a little time and attention to helping others goes a very long way.

I cannot say enough about Steve. He is an ambassador for our community and, without question, makes El Cajon a better place for each one of its residents. I want to thank Steve for his work and congratulate him on the Citizen of the Year award. His wife of 32 years, Lorraine, and his children Sarah and Ben, undoubtedly share Steve's enthusiasm and good nature. I want to extend my thanks and appreciation to them too.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing Steve Hamann and wishing him continued success in all future endeavors. The El Cajon community and our nation benefit from Steve's leadership, as well as others who commit their lives to causes bigger than themselves.

FAIR TAXES FOR SENIORS

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 24, 2011

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I recently introduced the Fair Taxes for Seniors Act (H.R. 331), which will provide a one-time increase in the capital gains tax exemption on the sale of a home for citizens who are 50 years of age or older. Passing this bill will give many seniors the additional money they need for nursing home care, medical costs, and other retirement expenses.

The Fair Taxes for Seniors Act doubles the current exemption by providing a one-time increase to \$500,000 for a single person and \$1 million for a couple that can be excluded from the sale of a principal residence for taxpayers who have reached the age of 50. Because they will be able to keep more, an added benefit is that family members and perhaps the government will be relieved of the burden of caring for these individuals as they grow older.

I hope that my colleagues will join me in co-sponsoring this important legislation.

WILLIE O. STEAM TRIBUTE

HON. SCOTT R. TIPTON

COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 24, 2011

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the life and service of Willie O. Steam, of Denver, Colorado. Patrolman Steam was killed in the line of duty in 1921 and was one of a few black police officers of his time.

Patrolman Steam, employed under the administration of Chief H.R. Williams, was a Special Policeman who worked full-time as a night watchman at City Hall. The week prior to his murder Patrolman Steam enforced an ordinance that prohibited illegal dances. Steam's

killer, Keil O'Neill, had been the offender of the ordinance and came to the dance hall where Mr. Steam was patrolling. O'Neill shot Patrolmen Steam once in the back and once in the head in retaliation. Mr. Steam never had a chance to remove his weapon from his holster, according to witness reports.

According to Chief Williams, Steam was "one of the most dependable and efficient men connected with the police department. He occupied a place on the force that was unique and getting another man to fill in the manner which Steam did, will be hard." For Steam's service to his community, the City of Denver paid his funeral expenses.

Mr. Steam's sacrifice needs to be recognized and commended by this body. He was only 48 years old at the time of his death, leaving a wife behind. I rise today to offer thanks to Patrolman Steam and his family for their service to the city of Denver and the State of Colorado.

PROTECT RETIREES

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 24, 2011

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, millions of retirees that worked in the public sector feel very threatened right now, and for good reason: their pensions are being threatened. As we engage in a national conversation about how to reduce the deficit both in our States and in our Nation, let us be clear about one thing: we will not be cutting the pensions of retirees—including teachers, police, fire and EMS workers, public works personnel, and many others—who devoted their careers to serving the public. The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities recently reported that States are facing 2012 fiscal year operating deficits totaling nearly \$125 billion dollars. This number represents both short and long-term financial challenges for States. But the fear, blame and confusion surrounding such a number has put a tremendous amount of pressure on elected officials and State legislatures to make immediate and drastic cuts to State services, including retiree pensions. Recently, a proposal was suggested to give States the ability to file for bankruptcy. Such an initiative is a non-starter, as it would do far more harm than good. It means that States who declare bankruptcy could seek to back out of their solemn promise to provide for those who served the public after their service was done.

Those promises are known as defined benefit pensions. The public employees were promised the security of knowing those benefits would be there when they need them. If States successfully cancel out these agreements under cover of bankruptcy, the costs to individuals as well as the trust in government will be enormous. We cannot, we must not and we will not ask retirees to pay the consequences of upending these long-term promises for the sake of a false short-term financial solution.

HONORING ALICE MUELDRATH

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 24, 2011

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise with sadness today to honor Alice Muelrath who passed away January 6, 2011, in Santa Rosa, California, at the age of 93. Mrs. Muelrath was deeply involved in the local dairy farming community, having grown up in a ranching family before marrying a ranch hand who later acquired two dairy operations of his own.

Alice's parents, John and Maria Albini, were part of a wave of immigrants from Italy who settled the area in the early 1900s, and Alice grew up in Bodega Bay. She and her three siblings spoke fluent Italian which was useful for both translating between cultures and keeping secrets from the kids.

In 1936, Alice married Peter Muelrath. The couple acquired a ranch in Bodega Bay and later second one near Santa Rosa. At the Santa Rosa ranch, Alice developed a skill for growing colorful flowers and was known for the beauty and variety of her plantings. They had two children, Bob and Mary; Bob, who is also a Sonoma County farmer, served as president of the Sonoma County Farm Bureau.

Alice was a cheerful and energetic woman who contributed with enthusiasm to a variety of community causes such as North Bay Dairy Women, Sonoma County Historical Society, Marin and Sonoma Italian Club, Sonoma County Farm Bureau, and Palm Drive Hospital.

Alice's husband passed away in 1983. In addition to her son and daughter, she is survived by her sisters Elsie Carmody and Jennie Poncia, five grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, Alice Muelrath exemplifies the proud Italian-American ranching tradition of Sonoma and Marin Counties. She and her family demonstrate the vibrancy and importance of agriculture in our community, and I am proud to honor her long life.

WE MUST ENSURE SAFE ROADS AND BRIDGES

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 24, 2011

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I recently introduced the Safety, Efficiency and Accountability in Transportation Projects through Public Inspection Act of 2011 (H.R. 328) to require public employees to perform the inspection and related essential public functions on all state and local transportation projects. My bill is intended to ensure that public safety is protected, transportation funds are not wasted and projects are delivered in a timely manner.

On transportation projects, the construction inspector is the eyes, ears and voice of the public. Inspectors ensure that construction and seismic standards are met, that projects meet safety requirements and that the materials used will stand the test of time. In short, inspectors are there to ensure that the motoring public gets what they pay for and public safety and the public interest are protected.

When the construction inspection function is outsourced to a private company, there is no longer a representative of the public on the job site. In this circumstance, one private company is charged with the task of inspecting the work of another private company. This creates multiple conflicts for the private inspector. First, the private inspectors' primary obligation and responsibility is not to the public, but to the success and profitability of his company. Because the private construction company whose work they are inspecting on one project may be a business partner on a future project, private inspectors may also feel pressure from the private contractor to take steps that ensure larger profits for both firms. I am concerned that these conflicts have led private inspectors to cut corners and overlook problems that threaten public safety, increase costs and delay projects.

There are many examples in which public safety has been threatened by the use of private inspectors, including Boston's "Big Dig" (where a concrete slab from a tunnel ceiling fell and killed a woman), the L.A. Redline subway (Hollywood Blvd. collapsed), the 8-805 Interchange in San Diego (10,000 defective welds on a seismic retrofit), the Connecticut I-84 project (hundreds of drains that lead nowhere).

Contracting out public inspection work also does not save money! Defective work requires extensive repairs, and inevitably, the taxpayer gets stuck with the bill. Comparative studies have also found that contracting-out engineering, design, and inspection costs more than to do this work in-house, and none of these studies found that consultant engineers were less expensive. Factors that contribute to consultants' excessive costs include the lack of competitive bidding, cost-plus provisions in contracts, salary differentials between the private and public sectors, profit margins of from 10% to 15%, and additional costs connected with selecting and supervising consultants.

Failure to have public construction inspectors has also delayed projects in the past and will undoubtedly do so in the future. One such example is the privately inspected \$12 million carpool bridge connecting the San Diego (405) and the Costa Mesa (55) Freeways. The project was to have been completed in April 2003. However, work was halted in August 2002 when chunks of concrete were falling from the structure and many cracks were noticed. Contractor and private inspector errors were later discovered and the carpool ramp did not open until January 2005.

The public and the federal government understand what's at stake. In a 2006 California public opinion poll, 71% of those surveyed said they want state engineers to inspect the construction of state highways; only 20% found private firms acceptable for the task. David M. Walker, the Comptroller General of the United States, stated: "There's something civil servants have that the private sector doesn't, and that is the duty of loyalty to the greater good—the duty of loyalty to the collective best interest of all rather than the interest of a few. Companies have duties of loyalty to their shareholders, not to the country."

I hope my colleagues will join me in protecting the public good by co-sponsoring this important legislation.