

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND RETIREMENT SECURITY ACT OF 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 1, 2012

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1173) to repeal the CLASS programs:

Ms. RICHARDSON. Madam Chair, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 1173, a bill that would repeal the Community Living Assistance Services and Supports program (CLASS). Instead of repealing the CLASS Act and leaving millions of Americans in need of long-term care with the status quo, Congress should be working together to improve the program.

Madam Chair, the CLASS program was designed to provide Americans with a voluntary long-term care insurance program that would make long-term care more affordable and accessible. Statistics show that there are currently over 10 million Americans in need of long-term care; by 2020, that number is expected to grow to 15 million. We have an obligation to ensure that those in need of long-term care have affordable options available to them.

The United States is facing a long-term care crisis. With the Nation's baby boomers nearing retirement, we can expect to see the number of seniors in need of long-term continue to rise in the coming years. Due to the high costs of obtaining long-term support services, it is estimated that there are 52 million unpaid caregivers—mostly relatives of those in need—providing long-term care in the home.

In my district, there are over 115,000 seniors and 12,557 residents collecting Social Security disability insurance—most of whom will most likely need long-term care services at some point in their lifetime. In addition, there are 85,444 of my constituents who are nearing retirement age and would benefit from the peace of mind of having insurance coverage for long-term care.

Each year, families pay more than \$50 billion out-of-pocket to provide long-term support services to loved ones. Many of these families are already hard-pressed financially, but do not have any other options available to them. Working to fix the CLASS program will provide working adults a national, voluntary, and premium-financed insurance program for the purchase of long-term care services and supports. Instead of working to fix the CLASS Act, the Republican majority is trying to repeal this important program in its entirety.

Madam Chair, it is estimated that about 70 percent of people over 65 will require long-term care services at some point during their lifetime. Medicare covers only minimal long-term care services such as short-term skilled nursing care and limited home health services.

Medicaid now accounts for nearly 50 percent of all long-term care spending nationwide.

Unfortunately, Americans wishing to utilize Medicaid for long-term care services must impoverish themselves in order to qualify. In many cases, families are left with no choice but Medicaid after they are forced to spend down their income and assets to pay for costly long-term care services.

Insurance policies in the private market which cover long-term care services are often too expensive for most Americans, and currently pay for only about 7 percent of spending on long-term care. Approximately only nine percent of Americans aged 50 or older have private insurance policies that cover long-term care services. The CLASS Act seeks to address the lack of available coverage by making long-term care services more accessible and affordable for working families.

The CLASS Act provides a framework with which to build a viable long-term care program. Repealing this much needed program brings us back to square one in our effort to provide working families with a national insurance program that enables them to plan for their long-term care needs.

Madam Chair, this is just another GOP attempt to dismantle the Affordable Care Act one piece at a time. The American people deserve better and Congress needs to work together to ensure that Americans of all income levels have access to long-term care services in the event that they become necessary.

Madam Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote against passage of this misguided legislation that simply ignores the need to address our Nation's long-term care crisis.

AMBASSADOR SULEYMANOV OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

HON. DAN BOREN

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2012

Mr. BOREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and welcome to Washington, DC Ambassador Elin Suleymanov of the Republic of Azerbaijan. On January 18 Ambassador Suleymanov presented his credentials to President Obama.

Ambassador Suleymanov has a distinguished diplomatic career. Prior to his appointment as Ambassador, Mr. Suleymanov served as Azerbaijan's first Consul General in Los Angeles.

While Azerbaijan has a new Ambassador to the United States, I bring to my colleague's attention that once again Azerbaijan lacks an Ambassador from the United States. After over a year of vacancy, President Obama nominated Matthew Bryza as Ambassador. After a stalled confirmation process President Obama appointed Matthew Bryza to the position in 2010. Unfortunately he was not given the opportunity for a confirmation vote in the Senate and has recently returned to the U.S.

Azerbaijan is a key strategic partner to the U.S. by providing an important transportation

route for supplies to our troops in Afghanistan and transit of Caspian oil and gas to the Mediterranean via the BTC pipeline. The relationship between the U.S. and Azerbaijan is too important not to have an Ambassador in place. As one of our few predominantly Muslim allies we must do what is right.

I encourage my colleagues to urge the Administration to nominate a new Ambassador to Azerbaijan and ask the Senate to act in the best interest of our national security and have an expeditious confirmation vote.

A TRIBUTE TO NIALL O'SHEA AND THE UNI-CAPITOL WASHINGTON INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 6, 2012

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, for decades the United States has worked closely with Australia on issues of great importance to our two nations. Australia has stood out among the international community as a friend of the United States and remains one of our closest allies today. Thirteen years ago, a program was launched to place Australian students in offices in our Nation's Capital. Since that time, the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program has delivered to the United States some of Australia's best and brightest to serve as interns in a variety of federal agencies, congressional offices and committees.

When the opportunity arose again to participate in the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program, I immediately agreed to welcome another Australian "ambassador." This is my third time hosting an intern from the program, and once again my office and I have been pleased with the positive contributions of Niall O'Shea, who was placed in our office. He has attended meetings and briefings, assisted my staff with various research initiatives, and helped serve my constituents of the Second District of Connecticut. His impeccable and clipped Australian accent is a real treat for visitors and callers from Connecticut whom he has interacted with. Niall's participation in this program has provided him with new opportunities and experiences that only the Uni-Capitol Washington Internship Program could provide. While in the program Niall has attended events at the Australian Embassy and listened to speakers from the State Department. A well-rounded college student, Niall will be receiving a dual Bachelor degree in law and art when he graduates from the University of Western Australia.

Many of my colleagues have also been privileged to welcome students like Niall to their offices. This year, 12 students from all across Australia are serving in offices in Washington, helping foster a new generation of understanding and shared experiences between our two nations. Launched by former Congressional staffer Eric Federing, The Uni-Capitol

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