

Since its enactment in 2000, the Coral Reef Conservation Act has stimulated a greater commitment to protect, conserve, and restore coral reef resources within jurisdictional waters of the United States. As a result, we now have a much better grasp of the condition of our coral reefs, and more focused management capability than at any time in our history. The Coral Reef Conservation Act Reauthorization and Enhancement Amendments of 2013 expands emergency response mechanisms, establishes a new community-based planning grants program, promotes international cooperation, and recognizes the important contributions of the U.S. Department of the Interior in coral reef management and conservation efforts. The bill does not authorize any new funding.

This bill would also codify the United States Coral Reef Task Force established in 1998 by President Clinton through Executive Order 13089. The work of the Task Force and its mission to coordinate the efforts of the United States in promoting conservation and the sustainable use of coral reefs internationally is vital to our interests. Since 1998, the Task Force has acted to facilitate and support better management and conservation of coral reef resources at the local level. Many beneficial efforts, such as the development and implementation of local action strategies to address threats to our reefs, are underway thanks to the work of the Task Force and its member agencies.

I would like to thank Reps. PIERLUISI, FARR, CHRISTENSEN, and WASSERMAN SCHULTZ for joining me as original cosponsors and I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to advance this legislation to enhance our capacity for the conservation and restoration of healthy and diverse coral reef ecosystems.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 3, 2013

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 3, 2009, the day I took office, the national debt was \$10,627,961,295,930.67.

Today, it is \$16,432,705,914,255.48. We've added \$5,804,744,618,324.81 to our debt in 4 years. This is a \$5.8 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a Balanced Budget Amendment. I have advocated for a Balanced Budget Amendment since I was sworn in for this very reason.

I will be once more forming the Balanced Budget Amendment Caucus to fight for a return to fiscal responsibility. We must stop this unconscionable accumulation of debt.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HEALTH INSURANCE INDUSTRY ANTITRUST ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2013

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 3, 2013

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to introduce the Health Insurance Industry Antitrust Enforcement Act of 2013.

This bill would level the playing field between health care professionals and insurance companies in the health care industry and improve the quality of patient care. The Health Insurance Industry Antitrust Enforcement Act of 2013 would eliminate the antitrust immunity provided under the McCarran-Ferguson Act for price fixing, bid rigging, and market allocation by health insurance issuers or medical malpractice insurers. The bill would also repeal the McCarran-Ferguson exemption for the business of health insurance and enable enforcement by the Federal Trade Commission.

The purpose of this bill is to extend antitrust enforcement over health insurers and medical malpractice insurance issuers, which currently enjoy broad antitrust immunity under the McCarran-Ferguson Act. This immunity can serve as a shield for activities that might otherwise violate federal law.

This bill will end the mistake Congress made in 1945 when it added an antitrust exemption for insurance companies into the McCarran-Ferguson Act. The blanket antitrust exemption created by the 1945 bill has shielded health insurance companies from legal accountability for decades. Our nation's antitrust laws exist to protect free-market competition and this bill will restore competition to the health insurance marketplace.

The House Judiciary Committee held extensive hearings on the effects of the insurance industry's antitrust exemption throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. It became clear that the exemption was not needed to enable the insurance industry to provide any service to their policyholders, and that policyholders and the economy in general would benefit from increased competition among insurance providers.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill because it would prohibit price fixing, bid rigging, and market allocation, pernicious practices that are detrimental to competition and result in fewer options and higher prices for consumers.

The bill I introduce today is intended to root out unlawful activity in an industry that has grown complacent by decades of protection from antitrust oversight. In doing so, we aim to make health insurance more affordable to more Americans.

THE 2ND ANNUAL DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORIAL TRIBUTE

HON. WM. LACY CLAY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 3, 2013

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to give distinct recognition to the 2nd Annual Dr. Mar-

tin Luther King Jr. Memorial Tribute—an event paying tribute to men and women of diverse social strata committed to strengthening civil rights, corporate responsibility, civic involvement, education and humanitarian efforts through dedicated responsibilities.

Saint Louis University will honor six distinguished individuals at the event, with the Donald Brennan Humanitarian Award bestowed upon Dr. Karla Scott, Director of Black Studies for the University. In addition, the Martin Luther King Civil Rights Award will recognize Ms. Xerona Clayton, for her extraordinary commitment to the advancement of the civil rights movement.

Other awardees include Kathy Osborn, the President and CEO of the Regional Business Council for her civic dedication, Judge Jimmie Edwards, founder of the Innovative Concept Academy for bridging the academic achievement gap of African American students, and James Buford, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis for his leadership in service to the community.

This year's celebrated corporate leadership awards will honor the efforts of Thomas Voss and Keith Williamson. Voss, the President of Ameren Corporation, and Williamson, Senior Vice President of Centene Corporation have demonstrated exemplary social responsibility to remove barriers to the success of minorities through their business models, accomplishments and corporate giving.

Mr. Speaker, the 2nd Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Tribute inspires advocacy for social justice through the works, accomplishments and deeds of the honored men and women. I urge my colleagues to join me in recognizing this event slated to be held this January in the beautiful City of St. Louis.

INTRODUCTION OF THE BALANCED BUDGET CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 3, 2013

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to reintroduce legislation that will amend the United States Constitution to force Congress to rein in spending by balancing the federal budget.

We have a spending addiction in Washington, DC, and it has proven to be an addiction that Congress cannot control on its own and which is bringing dire consequences. We have gone in a few short years from a deficit of billions of dollars to a deficit of trillions of dollars. We are printing money at an unprecedented pace, which presents serious risks of massive inflation. Our national debt recently surpassed an astonishing \$16 trillion and continues to rapidly increase, along with the waste associated with paying the interest on that debt.

Our first Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson, warned of the consequences of out-of-control debt when he wrote: "To preserve [the] independence [of the people,] we must not let our rulers load us with perpetual debt. We must make our election between economy and liberty, or profusion and servitude." Unfortunately, it increasingly appears that Congress has chosen the latter path.