

Mr. McNERNEY. Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing the Medal of Honor Day, as well as honoring Master Sergeant Richard Pittman, a veteran who served more than 20 years in the Marines. Mr. Pittman earned the Medal of Honor, the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, along with others.

Mr. Pittman was born in Stockton, California, and attended local schools. After graduating from Franklin High School in Stockton, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. During the Vietnam War, he was assigned as a rifleman to the First Platoon, Company I, Third Battalion, Fifth Marines, and would later become squad leader.

While on assignment near the demilitarized zone, his leading company came under enemy fire at close range. Mr. Pittman risked his life to save many of his comrades while he exchanged fire and destroyed many enemy forces.

I've been fortunate to get to know Mr. Pittman over the last several years and know that he cares deeply for this country. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Master Sergeant Richard Pittman and all the Nation's other veterans for their bravery and service to the United States.

HEALTH CARE CONSCIENCE RIGHTS ACT

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

Mr. FLEMING. Madam Speaker, the Obama administration's assault on religious freedom must stop. The so-called HHS mandate established under ObamaCare forces individuals, charities, and businesses to buy health insurance that includes coverage for drugs which may destroy human life.

This week a Federal judge stopped the enforcement of the HHS mandate against the founder of Domino's Pizza, the former founder. Like many other companies, Domino's Farms Corporation, the company which was granted this injunction, offers health insurance to its employees, but not coverage for drugs that could destroy human life. To do so would violate the religious rights and beliefs of the company's owners.

That injunction is a victory, but no one should have to battle the Federal Government in court to stop it from infringing on religious values. That's why I am proud to introduce with my colleagues, DIANE BLACK and JEFF FORTENBERRY, the Health Care Conscience Rights Act, a bill that rests on the bedrock principle that our government must not force people to violate their religious and moral beliefs.

I ask everyone to sign on today and support this bill.

HONORING YOANI SANCHEZ

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

Mr. GARCIA. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize a courageous woman whose work on behalf of the advancement of human rights has inspired millions throughout the world and continues to shine a light on the cause of freedom just 90 miles away.

For over 10 years, Yoani Sanchez has documented the realities of life in Cuba through her blog, Generation Y, and drawn worldwide attention to Cuba's civil society. Her riveting accounts detailing human rights violations and other injustices have earned her praise and recognition throughout the world. Yoani stands as a beacon of hope for Cuba's future, and her strength in the face of incredible odds has earned our community's profound admiration and respect.

If my colleagues would indulge me, I would like to say a few words in Spanish.

It's a great honor to recognize the courage of Yoani Sanchez who serves as a source of inspiration for the millions around the world who seek freedom and human rights.

Yoani will be here next week. I invite my colleagues to take the opportunity to meet this very courageous woman.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FLEMING). The gentleman will provide a translation to the Official Reporters.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Brian Pate, one of his secretaries.

SUPPORTING KNOWLEDGE AND INVESTING IN LIFELONG SKILLS ACT

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 803.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 113 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 803.

The Chair appoints the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 0917

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 803) to reform and strengthen the workforce investment system of the Nation to put Americans back to work and make the United States more competitive in the 21st century, with Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. KLINE. Madam Chair, I rise in strong support of H.R. 803, the Supporting Knowledge and Investing in Lifelong Skills Act, the SKILLS Act, and yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Despite an increase in hiring last month, our Nation is still experiencing a jobs crisis. Twelve million Americans are searching for work. Nearly 5 million of these unemployed workers have been without a job for 6 months or longer. For many Americans, the hope of a new job grows more desperate the longer they are unemployed.

Jack Walerius has not had full-time work for more than 3 years and has lost count of the number of times he has applied for a job. He recently told CBS News:

From my perspective, from my eyes, I still see that we're in a deep recession.

Today, we have an opportunity to advance reforms that will give workers like Jack a better chance to succeed. Our economy is extremely competitive and constantly changing. Unfortunately, the workforce training system has failed to keep up. It's not surprising when you consider the size of the bureaucracy that now exists.

This chart is a snapshot of the current job training system. It includes more than 50 programs spread across nine Federal agencies. President Obama described it as a "maze of confusing training programs." I completely agree.

□ 0920

The current system is inefficient and ineffective. For individuals served through the Workforce Investment Act, less than one in five completed training. Fewer than half of those who received employment assistance such as job searches and resume writing were able to find work.

To make matters worse, Federal mandates stifle the engagement and innovation of employers and State and local leaders. Onerous rules prevent workers from accessing the training they need when they need it. And taxpayer dollars are being spent with little accountability.

A bloated bureaucracy is standing between workers and the support they need. We've tried the Washington-knows-best approach, and it isn't working. It's time to move in a new direction. It is time for a workforce training system that empowers job creators to meet the demands of a dynamic economy. It is time to give State and local leaders greater freedom to serve their communities. It is time for a workforce training system that spends taxpayer money wisely. It is time to invest less