

concerned that the President does not have the long-term vision and the will to complete the mission.

As Americans, we should all want the President to succeed. The cost of failure is far too great. However, the cost of not acting is even greater. The President's rhetoric must match his action and his resolve.

Madam Speaker, Congress will answer the call of the American people and give the President the tools that he has asked for while providing rigorous oversight and requiring accountability for the duration of this military campaign. We must complete the mission.

I, for one, stand ready to work with anyone to defend our national security and protect our very way of life.

#### THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEUTCH. Madam Speaker, the Affordable Care Act is working in Florida for a very simple reason: no one wants to be uninsured. People want affordable health insurance.

Florida enrolled more people in health insurance coverage than any other State using [healthcare.gov](http://healthcare.gov). This only illustrates just how high a demand there is for affordable coverage in our State.

During the first open enrollment period, some 983,000 Floridians signed up. More than 90 percent were eligible for some type of financial assistance under the law, which drove premiums down to an average of \$79 a month in Florida.

In the span of a few months, our State's uninsured rate dropped from 25 percent to under 20 percent. I am confident that when open enrollment begins this fall, even more Floridians will take advantage of the opportunity to get covered.

Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, there are 1.06 million Floridians who won't have that opportunity. They don't make enough money to qualify for help buying private insurance in the marketplace, and they have been denied the Medicaid coverage that they are eligible for by Governor Rick Scott and by our GOP State legislature.

Health care reform was designed to help more Americans afford private health insurance and provide basic coverage for low-income people through Medicaid. To do so, the law extended eligibility for Medicaid to people earning up to 138 percent of the Federal poverty level.

Talking in terms of the Federal poverty level seems abstract, but for the millions of Americans working hard for such little income the hardships that they face are very real. Earning 138 percent of the poverty level means barely making ends meet. For a full-time minimum wage worker it means scraping by on less than \$16,000 a year; for a family of four it means bringing

in less than \$32,000 a year, struggling to afford food and other basic necessities. Unfortunately, in Florida, it also means going uninsured. That is unacceptable in 2014 when there is a Federal law on the books that says that they don't have to be.

As a member of the House Medicaid Expansion Caucus here in Congress, unfortunately, I find myself in a position where I have to ask Governor Scott and my former colleagues on the floor of the legislature just a few questions: Are two young parents working fast-food jobs in Miami less deserving of primary care visits than a couple working at the same burger chain in Colorado? Are the chronic headaches of a home cleaner in West Palm Beach somehow less serious than those doing the same work in West Virginia? Is a loved one struggling with substance abuse in Orlando any less worthy of treatment than someone in New York or in Maine? Are these 1,060,000 Floridians somehow undeserving of the coverage our Federal health care law has made them eligible for?

These are some of the most hard-working people in our State. They are proud moms and dads. They are cashiers and housekeepers, security guards and fast-food workers, office clerks, and landscapers. They are veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan. They are adults who have gone back to college to further their careers.

Our desire to give Florida families the same shot at leading healthy, productive lives as Americans in any other State should be enough to convince Governor Rick Scott to call the legislature back into session tomorrow to get it done.

But just in case our responsibility to protect families and promote public health isn't enough, economists have also found that no other State has more to lose by rejecting Medicaid expansion—by rejecting Medicaid expansion—than Florida.

Just this month, a McClatchy analysis of The Urban Institute data concluded that Florida's decision to deny Medicaid to 1,060,000 people will cost our State an astronomical \$66.1 billion by 2022. Florida's hospitals are expected to lose \$22.6 billion over that same period and will continue to bear the burden of providing expensive emergency room care to uninsured patients for nothing in return.

The billions and billions of dollars at stake for Florida through Medicaid expansion would do far more than expand basic coverage to 1.06 million low-income people. These dollars would also generate new growth and opportunity throughout Florida's economy.

That is because when hospitals are actually paid for their services their balance sheets improve, they have more room to invest and to expand. When they build a new surgery wing, they put to work more engineers and construction contractors and they hire new staff and they create good, well-paying jobs in our State.

According to the Council of Economic Advisers at the White House, the economic growth injected into Florida's economy would deliver about 63,000 new jobs between now and 2017. Missing out on that kind of opportunity will be devastating for our State. Failing to cover those 1,060,000 Floridians would not deliver real savings to taxpayers in the long run.

It is time for Governor Scott and the Florida legislature to focus less on politics and more on helping Floridians, parents, students, veterans, and workers get the coverage they desire and that they are entitled to.

#### IRS ACCOUNTABILITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CARTER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARTER. Madam Speaker, today, I rise in support of five common-sense bills that hold the government accountable to the people it was created to serve.

It is amazing that we have an agency called the Internal Revenue Service to which we have surrendered almost unlimited power for the purposes of collecting revenues of this country. Arguably, American citizens will tell you that the IRS has control over their lives, their liberty, and their property, and, some would argue, without due process of law.

You don't tell your taxman: I am not going to answer that question, I am going to take the Fifth, because immediately he will seize your property.

Yet we witnessed on television—as we found out—that the IRS was being looked into for being incompetent and corrupt and maybe the most incompetent and corrupt Federal agency in the country, and that they were actually out investigating groups who were voicing their absolute constitutional right to express their opinion in the political arena and the right to gather and meet, which is guaranteed by the Constitution.

But, no, the first thing we get from the person in charge is: I am going to take the Fifth Amendment. As many can see, we have been battling in the committee process in Congress over and over with the IRS. They have abused our tax system to target conservative political organizations, and this abuse has to be stopped and they have to be held responsible. Of course, when we actually have someone that we see is responsible, the quick solution for the IRS is transfer them somewhere else.

Well, I am proud the House has taken action to curb the power of the IRS by streamlining the removal of Federal bureaucrats who engage in misconduct or destroy Federal records. In front of a Federal District Court, you just try shredding records that a court has ordered you to bring before them and see what that Federal judge will do to you.

We are also voting to prohibit the IRS officials from using personal email

to conduct official business, putting fairness back into the appeals process, and ensuring taxpayers know the status of IRS investigations. This is not much to ask. Just tell us what is going on.

These bills are important steps toward a level of accountability the Obama administration has been unwilling to take. This is good legislation. It sets our bureaucrats straight.

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**WE CANNOT PERMANENTLY BE AT WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN PEOPLE**

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, many years ago, I voted for the first gulf war after attending classified briefings about the great threats we faced from Saddam Hussein's elite troops; then I watched them surrender to CNN camera crews and empty tanks. I realized then that the threat had been greatly exaggerated.

A few years later, we rushed to war in Iraq against weapons of mass destruction that were not there. The threat at the time of the second gulf war was greatly exaggerated, and I am glad that I voted against going to war that time.

After the horrible beheadings of two American citizens, I felt we should respond, and I have publicly supported limited air strikes. I hope we can at some point, if we are not doing so already, send in a special operations team, or teams, to get those who have committed these beheadings just as we got Osama bin Laden; however, I do not support sending thousands of young Americans as combat troops on the ground into Middle Eastern civil and religious wars.

The primary responsibility for fighting over there should be up to the countries in that region, and I do not believe we should have some fake coalition where most of the fighting and most of the funding comes from the U.S. military as in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

While ISIS—or ISIL, as it has also been referred to—is a threat, we have faced far greater threats at other times in our history.

Some of our leaders clamor for war to prove how tough they are. Some want to be little Churchills. Many may believe, if they don't support the strongest possible action, they are afraid they will be blamed if something bad happens; however, both our President and the Secretary of Homeland Security have said our intelligence and military officials have no evidence of any credible threat against the U.S. at this point.

In addition, we have spent \$716 billion on homeland security since 9/11, just at the Federal level, not counting

the billions spent by State and local governments and private companies. Just one company, FedEx, told me a couple of years after 9/11 that they had spent \$200 million on security that they would not have spent had 9/11 not happened.

On top of that, we spend much more on defense than the next top 10 nations combined and almost more than all nations combined since the poor nations spend very little on defense. If we devoted our entire Federal budget to the Middle East, we could not stop all the fighting or solve all the problems of that region. If we spent our entire Federal budget on homeland security, we could not make our country 100 percent perfectly safe.

Some radical Islamic fanatic may do something bad in the U.S. but we are already spending all we can and doing all we can if we are going to meet the needs of our own people. The first obligation of the U.S. Congress should be to the American people, and the people of the Middle East are going to have to solve most of their own problems on their own.

We do not have the money or the authority to try to run the whole world, and we certainly shouldn't panic or overreact to this threat from ISIS. Just a few weeks ago, their numbers were supposedly between 5,000 and 10,000. Now, we suddenly have them up to 20,000 to 31,000, but we have over 1 million in our military, and, supposedly, other nations are going to help against ISIS.

The leaders of ISIS have proven themselves to be cowards by beheading unarmed, defenseless men in front of cameras in undisclosed locations. We fought against al Qaeda in Iraq and Afghanistan and then with al Qaeda in Libya. A year ago, our hawks wanted to take out Assad in Syria. Now, we want to have him with us against ISIS.

I agree with what Judge Andrew Napolitano wrote a few days ago:

What should Congress do? It should declare once and for all that we will stay out of this ancient Muslim civil war of Shia versus Sunni. We have been on both sides of it. Each side is barbarous. In the 1980s, we helped the Sunnis. Now, we are helping the Shias.

Last year, Mr. Obama offered to help the Islamic state by degrading its adversaries; now, he wants to degrade the Islamic state. We have slaughtered innocents and squandered fortunes in an effort to achieve temporary military victories that neither enhance our freedom nor fortify our safety.

We will only have peace when we come home, when we cease military intervention in an area of the world not suited for democracy and in which we are essentially despised.

I agree with Judge Napolitano.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I say again that we cannot take care of our own people and our country if we are permanently at war in the Middle East.

**WILDFIRE SEASON IN THE WEST**

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

California (Mr. LAMALFA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, last night, in the town of Weed, California, which is in my own First Congressional District, over 100 of my constituents' homes were destroyed or damaged by fire, along with an elementary school and a timber mill, one of the area's largest employers. Thousands of my constituents are under evacuation orders, and the fire is not yet contained.

Aside from this tragedy, hundreds of thousands of acres of northern California forests have burned so far this year. In fact, the combined impact of the fires is already larger than last year's Rim Fire near Yosemite.

Unfortunately, while the Rim Fire received nonstop coverage, most of America is probably unaware of this year's calamities. The unfortunate truth is that rural California and much of the West experience massive wildfires like these every year. Over the past decade, wildfires have only grown in size and severity.

Madam Speaker, it doesn't have to be this way. We know why our forests are burning. It is because of decades of mismanagement caused by Federal bureaucracies and excessive regulations and red tape. They have an attitude at the Forest Service in many cases of just let it burn.

We suffer from road closures, inaccessibility to our forests, poor management, and, certainly, the ability to stop fires once they are started because of these policies.

The simple fact is our forests are not just mismanaged or even poorly managed. They are entirely unmanaged. As a result, they are overgrown, unhealthy, and ready to burst into flames at any time. I am supporting several measures to address the crisis in our forests, and last night's events create even more urgency for Congress and this administration to act.

Chairman HASTINGS' bill, H.R. 1526, which was passed in this House and I am a cosponsor of, would restore common sense to forest management, requiring the Forest Service to actively manage public forests to reduce fuel loads and improve forest health.

It is high time that the Senate act on this measure or, at the very least, produce its own forestry measure in the Senate so we can negotiate a final product. This would be part of the now 384 House bills that are languishing over in the Senate that need action.

Chairman SIMPSON's bill, H.R. 3992, another measure I am supporting and cosponsoring, will end the diversion of forest management funding to fire-fighting by treating fires like other disasters, allowing flexible wildfire disaster funding.

The Forest Service's increasing use of forest management funds for wildfire suppression means that we are no longer in the business of managing forests and, instead, just putting them out—or trying to—when they burn. This measure deserves a hearing in