

number of nieces and nephews. Our community is a much better place to call home because of Josie's timeless memory and she will be deeply missed.

HONORING ANDREW CUNNINGHAM

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 5, 2015

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Andrew Cunningham. Andrew is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 708, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Andrew has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Andrew has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, Andrew has contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Andrew Cunningham for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

RECOGNIZING BLACK HISTORY
MONTH

HON. BRADLEY BYRNE

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 5, 2015

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Black History Month and to pay tribute to two important African Americans from Alabama's First Congressional District.

While researching the history of some of my predecessors, I discovered that two of the earliest African Americans to serve in Congress actually represented the First Congressional District. Mr. Benjamin S. Turner served in the House of Representatives from 1871 to 1873, and Mr. Jeremiah Haralson served in the House from 1875 to 1877. I believe it is very fitting that we take time to recognize the lasting impact these individuals had on our area, but more importantly the influence they had on our nation.

Both Mr. Turner and Mr. Haralson were born into slavery and not provided a quality education. These men did not let slavery stop them from becoming educated, as both men worked hard to self-educate. After being freed from slavery, Mr. Turner and Mr. Haralson followed different paths to Congress. Mr. Turner became a successful businessman in south Alabama and was elected tax collector and councilman in Dallas County, Alabama. Mr. Haralson worked as a farmer and a minister before being elected to the Alabama State House of Representatives and later the Alabama State Senate. Both men would go on to represent the First Congressional District in Congress as Republicans, the same seat I now hold.

Mr. Speaker, these men serve as a great example and an important reminder about our

nation's history. These men remind us of the great American ideal that each and every person, regardless of the color of their skin, should have an opportunity to achieve their dreams. Thanks to the dedication and persistence of men like Mr. Turner and Mr. Haralson, today there are 46 black lawmakers serving in the 114th Congress, including the first-ever female, black Republican.

So during Black History Month, I encourage all Americans to take time to reflect on the past because looking to the past is the only true way to really understand common humanity. Let us remember the impact of Representatives Turner and Haralson and the countless other African Americans from Southwest Alabama who have made a lasting impact on our cities, states, and country.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION
OF H.R. 596, REPEAL OF THE PATIENT
PROTECTION AND AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 3, 2015

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 596 a bill to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

This is the 56th attempt by House Republicans to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

After 55 attempts it was my hope that this new Congress would begin its work in a more productive manner. We should be addressing the need to eliminate sequestration, the importance of raising the minimum wage, provide universal access to child care, and the passage of a jobs bill that rebuilds our nation's infrastructure.

Instead we continue to waste precious legislative time on fighting this effort to hurting Americans who need affordable, assessable and available healthcare.

The Affordable Care Act is the law of the land. Instead of attempting to repeal and undermine this law, we should use our time to work together to make improvements where necessary and ensure its smooth implementation.

Many of those most in need of the healthcare coverage provided by the Affordable Care Act live in the Districts of many members on both sides of this argument. Texas, my own state, leads the list of states with the highest percentages of uninsured residents.

Those states with the highest percentage of uninsured base on a report by the Bureau of the Census "Health Insurance Coverage in the United States:

Texas with 22.1 percent, Florida with 20.0 percent, Nevada with 20.7 percent, Georgia with 18.8 percent, Alaska with 18.5 percent, Oklahoma with 17.7 percent, and Arizona with 17.1 percent.

The highest concentration of the uninsured is the poor. The Affordable Care Act provides to states at no cost options for residents to enroll in healthcare programs through Medicaid. Unfortunately, some states like my state of Texas has rejected this important component of the Affordable Care Act for those in the state in most need of healthcare.

Other states that have not adopted the provisions of the law that expand Medicaid include Texas, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, Louisiana, Alaska, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Kansas, Montana, Idaho, Utah, Missouri, Virginia, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming and Maine.

Instead of focusing on protecting and caring for the health of our constituents, we are allowing partisan games to interfere with serving the best interest of our Districts.

There are 20 days before enrollment in the online Marketplaces will begin, the House majority is bringing this bill to deter the implementation of this key provision of the Affordable Care Act.

This latest attempt to prevent implementation of Obamacare would stop any premium tax credits from being provided until the HHS Inspector General Office certifies there is a program in place that "successfully and consistently verifies" household income and coverage requirements for those applying for these credits.

Conveniently, there is no way that this new requirement would be met in a timely fashion because the HHS IG office does not have the resources, staff or expertise to undertake such a certification. Therefore, since the new requirement will likely not be met, the Affordable Care Act will be drastically inhibited.

The impact of the enactment of this GOP bill would be to delay millions of qualified Americans from getting health coverage. The new requirement would deny millions of our hard-working constituents from getting the premium tax credits they are clearly eligible for beginning on January 1, 2014.

This is how the income verification program under the HHS regulations works to hinder the Affordable Care Act.

To get tax credits to make their health insurance affordable, individuals will have to submit their projected annual household income.

All income data submitted through the Marketplaces will be checked with IRS data, Social Security data, and current wage information.

If there is an inconsistency between income projection claims and proven past income, the Marketplaces will require additional documentation from applicants.

In addition, Marketplaces will check employer coverage information from the applicant and their employer against data from the: Office of Personnel Management and the SHOP Marketplaces (where available) as well as other data sources approved by HHS to verify eligibility for the tax credits.

If applicant information and other data do not match, the Marketplaces will ask for further supporting documentation.

Furthermore, all payments of premium tax credits are reconciled by IRS the following year. The income data submitted is reconciled against the actual wages and health coverage information on the individual's income tax return. If there is an inconsistency, the applicant pays back the excess, subject to statutory limit. There is 100% income verification and reconciliation on this back-end.

I cannot understand the continuous rejection by the Republicans against the Affordable Care act when the idea of everyone paying something towards their healthcare was a Republican idea put into practice in the State of Massachusetts by the former Republican presidential candidate, Mitt Romney.

Instead of focusing on the issues that the American people want addressed—we are having the same discussion to repeal the Affordable Care Act in efforts of my colleagues to repeal, obstruct and undermine this law. What is even more frustrating is that while there is so much energy in trying to repeal the Affordable Care Act, there has been no plan or suggestions posed on how to replace it.

I want to once again highlight the benefits of the Affordable Care Act so we can once in for all end the attempts to try and repeal this law that benefits so many Americans. Because of the Affordable Care Act, Americans are already seeing lower costs, better coverage, and patient protections that Republicans want to repeal:

13 million Americans benefited from \$1.1 billion in rebates sent to them from their health insurance companies last year.

105 million Americans have access to free preventive services, including 71 million Americans in private plans and 34 million seniors on Medicare.

Millions of women began receiving free coverage for comprehensive women's preventive services in August 2012.

100 million Americans no longer have a lifetime limit on healthcare coverage.

Nearly 17 million children with pre-existing conditions can no longer be denied coverage by insurers.

6.6 million young-adults up to age 26 have health insurance through their parents' plan, half of whom would be uninsured without this coverage.

6.3 million Seniors in the 'donut hole' have already saved \$6.1 billion on their prescription drugs.

3.2 million Seniors have access to free annual wellness visits under Medicare, and

360,000 small employers have already taken advantage of the Small Business Health Care Tax Credit to provide health insurance to 2 million workers.

Because of the Affordable Care Act 3.8 million people in Texas—including 2.2 million seniors on Medicare now receive preventative care services. Over 7 million Texans no longer have to fear lifetime limits on their healthcare insurance. Texas parents of 300,731 young adults can sleep easier at night knowing that their children can remain on their health insurance until age 26.

The protection provided by this law is a guarantee to 5 million Texas residents that their insurance companies will spend 80 percent of their premium dollars on healthcare, or customers will get a rebate from their insurance company.

In my state, there are 4,029 people who had no insurance because of pre-existing conditions, but today the Affordable Care Act has provided them with access to coverage. The Affordable Care Act means that many Texans are free of worry about having access to healthcare insurance.

However, the list of benefits from the Affordable Care Act is not completed. In 2014, the Affordable Care Act's final provisions will become available to our citizens. Insurance companies will be banned from: discriminating against anyone with a pre-existing condition, charging higher rates based on gender or health status, enforcing lifetime dollar limits, enforcing annual dollar limits on health benefits.

In 2014, access to affordable healthcare for the self employed or those who decide to pur-

chase their own coverage will be easier because of Affordable Insurance Exchanges. There will be a one stop marketplace where consumers can get the what Federal employees have done for decades—purchase insurance at reasonable rates from an insurer of their choice. This will assure that health care consumers can get the care that they need from the medical professionals they trust.

This Congress has work that needs to be done, and it has work that should be taken up to restore workers, their families and communities to sound economic health, not play partisan political games.

I urge my Colleagues to put partisan politics aside and join me in voting no on the passage of this bill.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

SPEECH OF

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 2, 2015

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, first, let me thank Congressman DONALD PAYNE, Jr. and Congresswoman ROBIN KELLY for hosting this evening's Special Order. I appreciate your leadership in organizing this important discussion.

Today we ask: where we were, where we are, and where we are headed. This year, we celebrate 50 years from the March in Selma. 50 years from the signing of the pivotal Voting Rights Act. Over that last 50 years, much has changed. But the work remains unfinished.

Fifty years ago, civil rights leaders and concerned citizens marched in Selma for freedom. The freedom to vote, to assemble, to petition their government—the Constitutional protections enshrined in our nation's Constitution.

It was a fight to end legal, Jim Crow segregation in the South that actively and systematically suppressed African Americans. But it was also a fight to protect all Americans—as Dr. King wrote in his famous letter from the Birmingham Jail: "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

We are still fighting to end injustice in our nation—we are fighting for economic justice and justice under the law.

Nearly 50 years ago, Dr. King outlined the two Americas that still exist today.

In a speech on April 14th, 1967 at Stanford University, Dr. King explained: "there are literally two Americas. One America is beautiful for situation. And, in a sense, this America is overflowing with the milk of prosperity and the honey of opportunity. . . . tragically and unfortunately, there is another America. This other America has a daily ugliness about it that constantly transforms the ebullience of hope into the fatigue of despair."

Ladies and gentlemen—tragically, there are still two Americas.

Systemic and institutional disparities and inequality are endemic at every level of our society—a legacy born in the suffering of the Middle Passage, nurtured through slavery and preserved with Jim Crow.

Today, we see this legacy in African American unemployment that is more than twice the unemployment rate of whites.

We see it in poverty rates for African Americans that are nearly three times the rate of white Americans.

We see it in the faces of the 1 in 3 black men who will have spent some time of their life in jail.

Mr. Speaker—In many ways, we are still living in two Americas. One of poverty, unemployment and injustice.

Mr. Speaker—too many are being left behind.

Sadly, Congressional leadership has decided to pursue partisan gridlock instead of acting for the millions of struggling Americans.

Tragically, many of the rights we fought for 50 years ago we are still fighting today. Congress has reauthorized the Voting Rights Act four times, with large bipartisan support. However, there has been no Congressional action since the Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act. Not one hearing, not one vote and the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee has made clear, on this floor, that he has no intentions of taking up this matter.

Likewise, the deaths of Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Oscar Grant—one of my constituents—and many others illustrate that there are still two Americas.

Recent events forced us to ask ourselves do Black lives matter? Yes—black lives matter. Brown lives matter. White lives matter—all lives matter.

Our institutions must reflect this core value that all lives matters. We in Congress have a duty to get serious about reforming our broken criminal justice system. We need to repeal unfair sentencing laws, increase police force diversity, improve racial sensitivity training, end the school-to-prison pipeline and work to re-integrate ex-offenders back into society.

The Black Lives Matter movement parallels the Civil Rights Movement's call to action, a movement to that calls us to end economic despair, drives out hate and fear and embrace love, and unseats the unjust status quo.

While Americans from all walks of life continue to protest and demand for change, Congress must hear their call and work to enact real change.

Like Congress acted 50 years ago after Selma, we were sent to Washington to address the issues facing our nation—let's start working on the structural and racial biases that pervades and poisons our institutions.

That is why I am a proud cosponsor of the Grand Jury Reform Act, which authorizes an appointment of a special prosecutor to conduct an investigation and present the results to a judge in a probable cause hearing, open to the public, whenever a police officer kills an individual while acting in the line of duty.

Mr. Speaker—We must pass this bill.

I have also introduced the Half in Ten Act to create a national strategy to cut the poverty rate in half over the next decade and lift 22 million Americans into the middle class.

Mr. Speaker—We must also pass this bill.

As a nation, we have made progress against racism and injustice. But we are backsliding.

We cannot lose the prize that our forefathers and mothers fought, bled and died to obtain and preserve. The soul of our nation is at stake.

Today, we carry the banner of Dr. King, Rosa Parks, and Medgar Evers. We have a duty to continue the fight for freedom, equality and justice.

This means Congress working together—Republican and Democrat—to pass important legislation to address unemployment and poverty and protect the voting rights of all.