

information? Often, the answer is the 24-hour news cycle, often filled by talking heads and sensationalism; or, to social media and message boards, where anyone can post anything—credible or completely misinformed.

The American public is no longer being informed by the likes of Walter Cronkite and Edward Murrow, and it is making our public debate increasingly partisan, polarized, and misinformed.

What few realize or like to admit is that there is a way Congress can help elevate the debate and educate our constituents with neutral, unbiased, nonpartisan information from the Congressional Research Service, or CRS.

For over 100 years, CRS has served as Congress' publicly funded think tank. Because they serve policymakers on both sides of the aisle, CRS researchers produce exemplary work that is accurate, nonpartisan, and easy to understand.

Despite the fact that CRS receives over \$100 million from taxpayers each year, its reports are not made available to the public. Instead, constituents must request individual reports through a congressional office. This has led to several undesirable consequences.

Well-connected lobbyists have the easiest access to these reports, unlike the average American. Second, while nonprofits make some reports available online, there is no guarantee that they will remain available and up-to-date. And most outrageously, a small industry has sprung up reselling these reports for exorbitant fees. In other words, businesses are making a profit by selling publicly funded work, work that ultimately belongs to the people.

Keeping these reports in the hands of Congress and beltway insiders is selfish and indefensible. I understand that allowing the public to access these reports will not answer all the questions constituents have about the work that happens on Capitol Hill, but it underscores the broader need for increased transparency in Congress and government.

Public trust in government has reached historic lows, causing too many Americans to simply give up on Washington and the mission of government. The best way to rebuild the public's trust and promote a more efficient and effective government is by furthering government accountability through increased transparency.

It is time to recognize that educators, students, media, and everyday citizens deserve access to CRS reports and that this access gives our constituents vital information about the issues, policies, and budgets we are debating here in Congress.

That is why Congressman LANCE and I introduced H. Res. 34, which directs the Clerk of the House of Representatives to maintain a centralized public database for nonconfidential CRS reports. This resolution gives the public tools to cut through the misinformation they face, gives them access to

something they are already paying for, and empowers the American people to hold Congress accountable for the decisions we make.

The steps toward a more open and transparent government may seem modest to some, but, in reality, they have a huge impact on how government serves the people. The mission of government matters, and if we are truly here to serve the people, then we owe it to them to operate in an open and transparent manner.

Let's give the public the information we are basing our decisions on. I urge my colleagues to stand up for transparency and accountability by supporting H. Res. 34. Information is power, and that is exactly what the American people deserve.

NATURAL GAS EXPANSION IN CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of the efforts of the Susquehanna Economic Development Association's Council of Governments, otherwise known as SEDA-COG, in working to expand the availability of natural gas in areas across central Pennsylvania.

Mr. Speaker, natural gas is not only produced right here in the United States of America, but it is also economical and versatile, with uses that range from home heating to cooking and drying clothes.

While Pennsylvania sits on one of the largest natural gas reserves in the Nation, many areas of the State are unserved or underserved by natural gas providers. Converting to natural gas can lead to big savings for consumers who currently rely on other home heating fuels such as propane and oil.

To help address this issue, SEDA-COG's \$160,000 pilot project will provide natural gas to these areas in order to attract manufacturers and to give homeowners the option to connect. To do that, this organization has joined with gas suppliers such as UGI Utilities and Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania, starting with at least three projects in central Pennsylvania that will expand natural gas access to hundreds of potential users.

In addition, the project will focus on the sustainability of delivering natural gas through "virtual pipelines," where compressed gas would be delivered by a truck to be used by large commercial businesses located nearby.

If successful, SEDA-COG officials say that they could expand this model to fuel users connected by a small pipeline network, including residential areas such as housing developments.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the innovative spirit of SEDA-COG and its partners, and I look forward to learning more about how these projects could benefit other areas of Pennsylvania.

130TH ANNIVERSARY OF DUBOIS BUSINESS COLLEGE

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the 130th anniversary of the DuBois Business College, which has several campuses located in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District.

The college was founded in 1885 by a local businessman who recognized a need for skilled businessowners, operators, and employees. The school's original location was once known as the largest building in America devoted exclusively to commercial education.

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In the many years since, DuBois Business College has expanded not just to a new location in DuBois, but also to include branch campus locations in Oil City, Philipsburg, and Huntingdon.

Today the college has a student body of more than 400 and offers a variety of associate's degree and diploma programs, all of which can be completed in less than 2 years. This provides a quick transition for students into the workforce.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to welcome administrators and students from DuBois Business College to Capitol Hill today. I look forward to congratulating them in person, and I wish them well in their continued success.

RESTORATION TUESDAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, today is Restoration Tuesday. I rise today to support voting rights for all Americans.

I was proud to stand alongside Members who support the restoration of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 recently and to launch the #restorethevote legislative strategy. This national effort will help mobilize support for H.R. 2867, the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2015, a bill that I sponsored with Representatives JUDY CHU and LINDA SÁNCHEZ to restore critical Federal oversight to jurisdictions who have a recent history of voter suppression.

Since elections are held on Tuesdays, every Tuesday that Congress is in session, like today, we will declare it to be Restoration Tuesday. So today I am speaking on the floor of the House of Representatives on the need to restore the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Our call for restoring the VRA is urgent, Mr. Speaker. As our colleague JOHN LEWIS so eloquently says, there is no other work more important in this or any Congress than protecting the full access of all Americans to the democratic process.

If we do not act, the 2016 election will be the first Presidential election in 50 years without the protections offered to millions of voters by the Voting Rights Act of 1965. We must act now.

I therefore urge all of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle, my Republican and my Democratic colleagues, to