

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

HYDE AMENDMENT

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

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to the Hyde amendment, which, for too long, has been denying women their constitutional right to access safe and legal abortion.

Mr. Speaker, restrictions on abortion do not make it go away. They make it less safe. For the last 40 years, the Hyde amendment has created an often insurmountable barrier for women across the country struggling to access affordable health care because it prohibits Medicaid coverage for abortion.

It disproportionately affects low-income women: young women, immigrant women, women of color, women in rural communities. In fact, more than half the women who have their rights restricted by the Hyde amendment are women of color.

It is long past time to do away with this harmful provision, which has been expanded over the years to deny coverage to Federal employees and their dependents, our military servicemembers, Native Americans, and even Peace Corps volunteers.

□ 1015

Restricting Medicaid coverage of abortion means that about one in four low-income women carry to term an unwanted pregnancy. That is not a decision the government should make for women. There are many things that Congress should be doing, but one thing we should not be doing is interfering with a woman's constitutional right.

So what should we be doing? We should be supporting policies that prevent unwanted pregnancies, like funding Planned Parenthood; and we should also pass the EACH Woman Act to lift the coverage ban that stands in the way of too many women who have the right to make their own decisions about what is best for them and their families.

Two generations of women have been affected by the Hyde amendment over the last four decades. Let's end this policy and let each woman be able to do what is best for herself and her family.

HONORING SPECIALIST JONATHAN R. KEPHART

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

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, over this past weekend people in Oil City, Venango County, located in Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District, joined to honor an American hero.

On April 8, 2004, Specialist Jonathan Kephart was killed in Iraq after his convoy patrol was ambushed outside of Baghdad. Kephart was credited with protecting his fellow soldiers by laying down fire against hundreds of enemy fighters, even after being wounded twice. He was the first soldier from Venango County killed in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Last Saturday, the Petroleum Street Bridge in Oil City was named after Specialist Kephart, and September 24 was declared Jonathan R. Kephart Memorial Day in Oil City.

I want to commend the efforts of everyone who worked to make this a reality, including State Representative Lee James, who authored and led the effort to pass the bill that made this distinction possible, earning unanimous approval in the Pennsylvania State House and Senate.

It is my hope that, because of this memorial to Specialist Kephart, his bravery and his sacrifice will live on in the hearts and the minds of the people in Oil City and Venango County for generations to come.

PROMESA

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

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, there is an important meeting in the Financial District of New York City, right in the heart of stock traders, the investment banks, and the bond buyers and sellers who trade in the debt of companies, countries, and municipalities. Right there in the nerve center of our financial market, they are holding a meeting.

Is it a meeting about Wells Fargo opening up thousands of accounts without the knowledge or consent of their customers? No, nothing like that. Nor anything related to the financial meltdown that our country is still recovering from that started right there. Nope.

This is the first meeting of the Puerto Rico financial control board, the junta de control, that has supreme power to rule over Puerto Rico.

Now, in case there is any confusion with the geography, New York City has a lot of Puerto Ricans, but it is not, in fact, the capital of Puerto Rico. My staff checked. San Juan is still the capital of Puerto Rico.

No, the meeting of the junta de control that has dominion over all aspects of the Puerto Rican people is not meeting in Puerto Rico. The meeting is taking place pretty close to Wall Street, which, I think, is symbolic of the way the junta de control over Puerto Rico came about.

It is a very bad omen for the future. Let me explain.

There are seven people—not elected, but appointed—who oversee every aspect of Puerto Rico's governance. Four are Republican nominees, there are three Democrats, and there is one non-voting member of the junta.

Several of the members of the Puerto Rico junta de control appear to have deep ties to Wall Street, where you can find many of the bondholders who traded and profited off Puerto Rico's \$72 billion in debt.

Judge Juan R. Torruella, the first Hispanic appointed by Ronald Reagan to the prestigious U.S. First Circuit Court of Appeals summed it up pretty well. He said to the Colegio de Abogados, the Puerto Rican Bar Association, that: "The principal purpose of PROMESA is to establish a collection agency for bondholders."

The person who is rumored to be the executive director of the junta de control is a big-time corporate energy lobbyist. He is the former head of the Center for Liquefied Natural Gas, a trade association of energy producers, which makes everyone concerned about Puerto Rico's environment nervous—with good reason.

So holding the first meeting in Lower Manhattan confirms to Puerto Ricans that the junta de control is by, for, and about the bondholders and corporate interests on Wall Street. So I consider the junta meeting on Friday as a home-court game.

The board will elect their chairman on Friday. Yeah, they are going to elect a chairman. Kind of ironic because they are electing the chairman to an unelected board because, well, democracy is good for some people—just not the people of Puerto Rico.

We have been told that members of the control board met secretly in Washington last week at the Treasury offices. Whether this is actually the first meeting of the control board is in great doubt.

And all of this raises the bigger problem of transparency. There isn't any. Under the law, this group can meet in secret anywhere in the world, and their proceedings can be conducted in executive session.

The board members can receive unlimited and unreported gifts, meals, even tickets to Hamilton and anything else, and we will never know. The scandal is coming. They are under no obligation to translate anything into Spanish, which, in case you forgot, is the language of the people that they are to control.

I will say, to their credit, that, after I wrote to each member of the control board and asked for a public commitment to transparency, a few of them wrote back. None of them made a public commitment to transparency, but a few acknowledged that keeping Puerto Ricans informed, making the meetings publicly accessible, and translating materials in the language of the people being governed were good principles.

It remains to be seen whether anyone on the junta de control really fights to inform the people of Puerto Rico, really sets up to be a champion for the schoolteachers and the doctors and the moms and the dads who are struggling, and the firemen, and the policemen who serve the people of Puerto Rico and are heroes.