

people who buy their insurance outside the workplace. Such discrimination may have been tolerable in the 1940s and 1950s, when it was common for a citizen to be employed at one large company for most or all of his or her working lifetime. But it is completely out of step with today's dynamic workforce. Today, this health penalty tax, as I call it, falls most heavily on people who are mobile and part-time, on day laborers, farm workers, and the like. It falls especially hard on Hispanic Americans, who are often employed in these ways, and one-third of whom are uninsured nationally.

Section 106 is unfair in another way. It discriminates against lower-paid workers. Because today's tax-code is progressive, taxing people at increasingly higher rates as their incomes rise, tax breaks like Section 106 are by definition more generous to those in the higher tax brackets. Thanks to this regressive aspect of our system of progressive taxation—a system I hope to see replaced someday by the Flat Tax—the highly paid CEO today gets a much more generous tax break for health coverage than does the waitress at the corner coffee shop. This unfairness needs to be addressed.

Right now, the ranks of the uninsured are swelling by more than 100,000 persons a month, and it appears this pace will continue unabated until we go to the root of the uninsured problem, and that is the tax code. The time has come for a more equitable tax treatment of health insurance. If Americans were given health-care tax breaks without regard to where they work, or how much they make, it will go a long way to ending the uninsured problem in this country.

The Health CARE Act would address the inequities of the tax code by creating a new tax credit for the purchase of private health insurance, in the amount of \$1,000 for a self-only policy and \$2,000 for a family policy. A person could use this credit toward the purchase of any qualified private health-insurance policy, including so-called "COBRA" coverage between jobs. If the person is paying for insurance on his own, he could apply the credit toward the cost of that coverage. The credit would be available regardless of where the person works or how much insurance he purchases. He could use it even if he owes no income tax. He could begin using it as soon as he signed up for insurance. He would not have to wait for a refund check from the IRS.

A person would be eligible for the credit if he met all of the following conditions: First, he is not already covered by a federal-government health insurance program. Second, he is not offered an employer-subsidized health plan through his place of work. Third, his annual adjusted gross income is less than \$35,000 (if it is a self-only policy) or \$55,000 (if it is a family policy). Persons making up to \$10,000 a year more than these amounts would receive a reduced credit, which is phased-down over the range.

Experts believe that any health-care tax credit must be worth at least 30 to 50 percent of the cost of an average health-insurance policy in order for people to be willing and able to use it to buy private health insurance. The Health CARE Act credit is worth about 40 percent of the price of a self-only policy, and

about 30 percent of the price of a family policy, depending on one's health status and the general cost of health care in one's region of the country. As a result, the credit will be available to an estimated 21.5 million currently uninsured Americans, and would help an estimated 5.5 million Americans who are now paying for health insurance without the benefit of any federal health-care tax breaks. The CARE Act credit would enable at least 3.2 million uninsured Americans to afford private health coverage, according to the Lewin Group, a private health-policy consultancy in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Speaker, as a resident of the State with the highest uninsurance rate in the nation, I think tax equity for the uninsured is a moral, economic, and political imperative.

The CARE Act is, in sum, a bipartisan proposal that offers real hope to Americans shut out of work-based coverage, makes health-care tax benefits fairer for all workers, begins to repeal the health penalty tax, gets more Americans covered, and does all of this while preserving the employer-based system of coverage on which most Americans rely.

I am proud of this legislation and will work hard with my Democratic partner, Mr. DOOLEY, to pass it this year.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE NASA-GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 29, 2000

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the men and women of the NASA-Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, MD, and congratulate them on their continued success as one of our Nation's premier space flight centers. In December, Goddard led a successful mission to service the Hubble space telescope and launched the Terra spacecraft, the first of an exciting line of satellites based at Goddard.

During the 1999 holiday season, the Hubble was given new navigation equipment and an improved vision of the universe. During an 8-day mission, beginning on December 19, the crew of the space shuttle *Discovery* captured, serviced, and redeployed the Hubble space telescope. On Christmas day it was released back into orbit, returning it to full operation with a new and improved view of the universe.

Through these improvements, Hubble scientists, for the first time in its 10-year history, have identified and implemented a value measurement for how fast the universe is expanding. This rate of expansion—the Hubble constant—is essential in determining the age and size of the universe.

In addition to the great accomplishments with the Hubble, on December 18, the first Earth-observing system satellite was successfully launched. This system, known as Terra is operating as expected and will enable new research into the ways Earth's land mass, oceans, air, ice, and life interact as a whole climate.

Since 1993, NASA has cut the cost of missions by two-thirds and has cut the time it

takes to develop spacecraft by 40 percent. NASA is also launching an average of four times as many science missions per year.

The great successes of Goddard Space Flight Center would not be possible without the outstanding support that has been provided by the contracting and business community of this region. Their efforts, in partnership with NASA, have been critical in placing Goddard in the forefront of space technology and giving the United States the recognition of being number one in space exploration and know-how.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, as we enter the new millennium, let us continue to support the men and women leading us onto the new frontier of space exploration. These men and women of the Goddard Space Flight Center are furthering our knowledge of the planet and the universe by which we are surrounded. I thank the astronomers, scientists, and the entire space exploration community for a job well done.

PALACE OF THE GOVERNORS EXPANSION ACT

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 29, 2000

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a bill to fund the expansion annex of the historic Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe, New Mexico. This is a companion bill to S. 1727 introduced in the Senate by Senator PETE V. DOMENICI.

The Palace of the Governors is the last remaining structure of a compound built between 1605 and 1610 by the Government of Spain. For centuries the compound, known also as "Las Casas Reales", served as a military and administrative center for the Spanish colonial empire, and functioned as the legislative chambers and official residence for those who governed New Mexico under the Flags of Spain, Mexico, and the territorial United States. This included 66 Spaniards, 17 Mexicans, and 22 U.S. Territorial Governors. Moreover, during what is known as the Pueblo Rebellion of 1680, the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico converted the historic structure into an Indian village until the Spanish return in 1692.

In 1909, the capitol for the New Mexican territorial government was moved to a more modern building, and the Palace of the Governors was designated as the Museum of New Mexico. Today, the Museum's collections include over 15,000 artifacts and priceless art works, 530,000 photographic images, 15,000 books, 450 linear feet of manuscripts, and 6,000 prints and maps. These precious items are irreplaceable historical and cultural artifacts, as they represent time periods spanning from the initial European exploration and colonization of the Southwest in the 16th century, to the birth of the atomic age and the exploration of space in the twentieth century. Some of Museum's artifacts include helmets and armor worn by soldiers in the expedition of Don Juan De Onate who established the first capital in the United States in July of 1598, and led the first permanent European community in the United States. These proud and