

The average weekly UC recipient currently gets \$281 and monies are usually available for up to 26 weeks, although this Congress recently enacted legislation with my support to temporarily provide an additional 13 weeks. In fiscal year 2007, the average regular UC benefit duration was 15 weeks or almost four months. When one considers rising costs, particularly for gasoline and food, it is not surprising that some estimates indicate that about 42 million Americans are living paycheck to paycheck. It is clear that many of our citizens are not well prepared for periods of unemployment. This is particularly evident when one notes that financial planners often advise people to build up three to six months in emergency savings to cover necessities such as monthly mortgage and car payments, utilities, insurance, food, home maintenance, and health care.

The Worker Savings Account Act is designed to help Americans enhance their personal safety nets. The measure would allow people to establish Worker Savings Accounts (WSAs) to supplement the benefits they might otherwise receive while unemployed including assistance received through the UC, TAA, ATAA, DUA, and WIA programs. Moreover, the Act clearly states that a person's decision to have a WSA shall in no way diminish their entitlement to receive those payments.

Like traditional Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs), WSAs would have an annual contribution limit of \$5,000, indexed to inflation. However, employers would be able to provide matching contributions of up to \$5,000 annually. Contributions to WSAs would be permitted until the account owner actually elects to take Social Security retirement benefits. At that time, a WSA account owner could choose to roll over their WSA funds into a 401(k) or IRA; alternatively, the WSA funds could be withdrawn without penalty but subject to taxation. Prior to a WSA account owner's decision to take Social Security payments, WSA funds could be withdrawn without penalty and tax-free as long as the owner lost their employment through no fault of their own or they had become disabled.

To encourage lower-income Americans to take advantage of the opportunity to contribute to WSAs, the Worker Savings Account Act would provide a refundable tax credit of up to \$1,000 for eligible individuals. This tax credit would be indexed to inflation and recipients could receive up to \$5,000 over the course of their career.

Madam Speaker, while this legislation would help every American build or enhance their personal safety net, it would be particularly helpful to my constituents. To illustrate, in June 2008, five of the 11 counties I represent in Northern and Central New York had unemployment figures that exceeded the national and state rates. Accordingly, I ask my colleagues to join with me as I work to enact the Worker Savings Account Act of 2008.

ON THE BIRTH OF SARAH LILIAN
PHILIPS

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I am happy to congratulate my friend Sunny Philips and her husband Jay Philips of Columbia, SC on the birth of their daughter Sarah Lilian Philips. Sarah Lilian Philips was born on July 31, 2008, weighing 6 pounds and 3 ounces. She has been born into a loving home where she will be raised by parents who are devoted to her well-being and bright future. I am particularly happy to share my birthday with Sarah Lilian Philips.

I am so excited for this new addition to the Philips family. On behalf of my wife Roxanne, and our entire family, we want to wish Sunny, Jay, Sarah Lilian and her three sisters Rigby, Maddy, and Nettie good health and happiness.

THE CONSUMER ENERGY RELIEF
ACT OF 2008

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, today I rise to introduce H.R. 6653, the Consumer Energy Relief Act. This legislation will provide Americans short- and long-term relief from rising energy costs by implementing a comprehensive strategy to reduce America's oil dependence while also driving down the price of gasoline.

In January 2001, when President Bush took office, the price of oil was \$30 per barrel, and the average price for a gallon of gasoline was about \$1.50. After 7½ years of energy policies spearheaded by President Bush, Vice President CHENEY, two oil men in their own right, and their friends in the oil industry, oil companies in the United States are earning record profits, the cost per barrel of oil has spiked to \$134 and Americans are spending at least \$3.96 on a gallon of gasoline.

Energy costs this high place a tremendous burden on the American people at a time when our economy is already on the verge of recession. The Consumer Relief Act takes important steps to reduce gas prices, eliminate our dependence on oil for fuel, and provide real relief to the American people by addressing the root causes of the spike in energy costs.

First, it will impose tighter regulations on excessive speculation. While the speculation market is a necessary function of America's economy, the deregulation of the market under the Bush administration has allowed the oil and gas market to be manipulated. Experts have testified that excessive speculation may be responsible for inflating prices by as much as \$20 to \$60 more per barrel. By regulating the speculation market, this bill will restore stability to international commodity trading and protect the American people from exorbitant gas prices.

Secondly, this bill will grant the Federal Trade Commission the authority to investigate and punish companies that artificially inflate the price of energy. The need for this provision is clear. An investigation of 1,000 gas stations in New Jersey resulted in tickets for 350 violations of gasoline price gouging-related offenses. Among the citations issued were: 62 violations for the pump not accurately metering, or measuring, fuel, 46 violations for per-gallon prices being different on each side of the pump, 37 violations for fuel grades (octane rating labels) not posted, 26 violations for inaccurate octane ratings, 19 violations for inaccurate total sale price calculation and 14 violations for multiple price changes in a 24-hour period. This investigation is indicative of what is occurring all over the country. Price gouging has become an epidemic.

Lastly, H.R. 6653 addresses the causes of our Nation's energy crisis by infusing a major investment in the research and development of renewable energy as well as providing financial assistance for the purchase of energy efficient appliances and vehicles. This investment will provide immediate relief to Americans by helping reduce their energy costs in the short-term by providing financial assistance for the purchase of efficient appliances and vehicles, and in the long-term by reducing our Nation's dependence on foreign oil by injecting much needed capital for the development of alternative energy.

The Consumer Energy Relief Act pays for this investment by establishing a windfall profits tax on oil companies who have benefited from President Bush's policies that protect the profit margins of oil companies over the tight budgets of hard-working Americans. Just today we learned that ExxonMobil is projected to earn a record \$52 billion this year and that the five largest oil companies in the United States are expected \$168 million.

Madam Speaker, American families and businesses are reeling from record prices—the result of 7 years of missed opportunities and an energy policy this White House has literally allowed the oil industry to write. Their policy is working for only one group: the oil companies which are earning record profits while Americans are paying record prices. The failure to diversify our energy sources with bold investments in renewable energy and more efficient technology, leaves us dangerously dependent on foreign oil, and hurts our economy and American families. The Consumer Energy Relief Act sets the United States on a different course, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Speaker, I must oppose this motion to adjourn, because I think the House should continue trying to pass legislation to improve our national energy policies.

Regrettably, so far our repeated efforts to do that have been thwarted by the refusal of

our friends on the other side of the aisle to support any of the proposals that have been considered.

They seem ready to put a perceived political advantage over working on a bipartisan basis to achieve results.

Otherwise, I cannot explain their recent votes on energy legislation.

Looking back, we see that a majority of Congressional Republicans have time and again voted against sensible energy legislation.

They have voted against renewable energy, against the first new vehicle efficiency standards in 32 years—saving \$1,000 in fuel costs per car per year—and against reducing transit fares for commuter rail and buses.

They have voted against expedited drilling in Alaska's National Petroleum Reserve and against adding a due-diligence requirement that could stimulate expedited exploration and development on other Federal lands already leased for that purpose.

They also voted against releasing 10 percent of the record amounts of oil stored in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (to be replaced with heavy oil that is better suited for that storage), even though that addition to the supplies on the market could ease gas prices.

And, finally, too many of our Republican colleagues opposed better regulation of the commodity markets, to reduce the ability of speculators to artificially increase the price of oil, even though the bill had been approved in the Agriculture Committee by voice vote and was supported by the committee's ranking Republican member.

So, I certainly understand why many of our colleagues are prepared to give up for now and adjourn today in order to begin the normal August district work period.

But I think we owe it to our constituents and to the country to stay here at least for now, and to continue working on energy legislation. And for that reason, I cannot vote for this motion to adjourn.

STATEMENT IN HONOR OF LEE KLING

HON. RUSS CARNAHAN

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Mr. CARNAHAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding contributions made by fellow Missourian, Lee Kling, an individual who placed the needs of country above his own.

Like many great Americans, Lee did not stand steadfastly by; instead, he insisted on getting involved. He saw his plight not in terms of one or a few, but as one shared by many.

Sadly, we have lost a great American in Lee Kling.

He was a man who invested in his community and family, and always found the time to give.

No job was too little or big for Lee. Whether at the center of Presidential politics, involved in efforts to save military bases, or rebuilding our state highway system, he was proven in advancing the best of any cause that might come his way.

He took on all comers with a positive attitude, and fought back against unwanted turns of life.

Because of him, and his principled approach to business, building a better community was always possible.

It is with great thanks to Lee that we are all left with such great civic pride.

I am grateful for his example, and I honor his life and achievements that serve as a great example for us all.

RECOGNIZING WIRELESS BROADBAND COMPANY ON THEIR GRAND OPENING AND RIBBON CUTTING

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I stand before you today to recognize Wireless Broadband Company for their far-sighted provision of high speed Internet services to rural areas.

Wireless Broadband Company is a pioneer in the high speed Internet industry as they are reaching customers that larger companies have deemed unprofitable. This company has earned my respect for remembering that rural communities should not be left behind in the Information Age. Farmers, ranchers, lake-area inhabitants, and other country dwellers now have immediate access to online communities and knowledge databases thanks to the innovation and concern of this company. Wireless Broadband Company will be opening their third office and continues to expand their service capacity to rural areas.

Madam Speaker, I commend the management and employees of Wireless Broadband Company for the positive professional contribution they have made to rural communities, notably constituents within the 26th District of Texas. I warmly congratulate Wireless Broadband Company upon the opening of their third store and wish them continued business growth.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, on July 22, 2008, I was unavoidably detained and unable to be in the Chamber for a rollcall vote. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 512, the Aviation Safety Enhancement Act of 2008.

INTRODUCTION OF THE MEDICARE IMAGINE DISCLOSURE SUNSHINE ACT

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce companion legislation to S. 3343, the Medicare Imagine Disclosure Sunshine Act of 2008. This legislation would require physicians, at the time certain imaging procedures are ordered, to inform the patient of any ownership interest the physician may have in those imaging services and provide the patient with a list of other, local imaging providers.

This legislation is based on recommendations by both the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

The Medicare Imaging Disclosure Sunshine Act will provide beneficiaries more transparency and disclosure of potential conflicts of interest when physicians write referrals for imaging services while also providing beneficiaries with the consumer-friendly option to choose when and where they seek an imaging procedure.

Madam Speaker, I believe this legislation takes an important step toward a more transparent referral procedure, and in the coming weeks I plan to continue to work on this legislation with the committees of jurisdiction and stakeholders and revise it so that it achieves the best possible balance for physicians, beneficiaries, and the health of the Medicare system.

TRIBUTE TO THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MONTVILLE POLISH CLUB

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Montville Polish Club. On August 30, 2008, the club will commemorate 75 years of history with a night of celebration including traditional pierogi, kielbasa, and kapusta and Polish dancing.

In the midst of the Great Depression, John J. Smith, Sam Onuparik and John Emilyta, conceived the idea for a regional Polish-American club to help connect and empower citizens of Polish descent in Montville, Connecticut and surrounding communities. In 1932, with the help of Walter Walencyk, these men were able to garner support from 33 additional members of the community. In October of that year, the Montville Polish Club convened their first meeting in the Papyis Hall in Uncasville, Connecticut.

In a time of great financial uncertainty, the Montville Polish Club offered hope and opportunity through continuity for members of the Polish community in eastern Connecticut. For newly arrived Polish immigrants, the club offered opportunities to acclimate to American