

to pull themselves out of the recession. The health care legislation that passed the House floor Sunday evening does just that. Beginning this week, health care reform will begin to impact my district in upstate New York. My constituents' number one concern is to create jobs. For our small business owners, tax credits of up to 35 percent of insurance costs are now available, allowing them to free up funds to hire new employees and expand.

The bill will help our seniors pay for their medication, closing the Medicare part D doughnut hole within a decade, and improve the system for over 100,000 Medicare beneficiaries in our communities. No longer will our neighbors have to worry about losing or being denied quality insurance because they get sick. The bill will end rescissions and denials based on preexisting conditions. The bill will make our health care more efficient, providing new investment in training programs for primary care professionals and fund 12 new health care facilities in upstate New York. Health care reform will set our college graduates off on the right foot, allowing 65,000 young adults in my district to obtain coverage through their parents' plan until they are 26.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Ms. TITUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. TITUS. Madam Speaker, yesterday marked a historic day as President Obama signed the reform legislation that will give families more control over their health care and the same kind of choices that Members of Congress have.

Yet before the ink was even dry on the President's signature, Republicans pledged they would repeal health care reform if given the opportunity. Reform that will end discrimination from preexisting conditions, Republicans would repeal it. Reform that will close the prescription drug doughnut hole that so many seniors fall into, Republicans would repeal it. Reform that will give the largest health care tax cut in history to families and small businesses to purchase insurance, Republicans would repeal it.

Yesterday we took an important step forward with commonsense reform that will improve coverage for over 1.1 million people in southern Nevada. Nevada's families cannot afford a return to the status quo of skyrocketing costs, of living every day with the fear that they are just one illness or one injury away from losing it all. We cannot repeal that.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, it has been interesting listening to the other side of the aisle talk today. One gentleman got up and talked about the health care bill in a cold and calculating fashion that made me think that he wanted the trains to run on time. Never did he consider the fact that the Congressional Budget Office said that this is the largest deficit-reducing bill in the history of the United States, over a trillion dollars in the second 10 years, and \$123 billion in the first 10 years.

Another said it is patient centered, patient centered. It sounds nice, Madam Speaker. What that means is that if the patient has money now, they can get health care; and if the patient doesn't, they don't get health care. And if you don't get health care and you don't get wellness programs and you don't get prevention programs, you die. You don't get mammograms and you don't get colonoscopies. You don't find out if you have cancer, and you die. Patient centered, very cold and calculating.

They say we need to fix this bill. They never explained what part of the bill they liked. They were against it all. Daniel Webster said to do something worthy to be remembered. What the other side did was say you lie, baby killer, and encourage outsiders that almost brought about civil unrest.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind Members not to traffic the well when other Members are speaking.

HEALTH REFORM HELPS SMALL BUSINESSES

(Mr. MURPHY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MURPHY of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today as someone who has been building and starting small businesses for my entire adult life. The small businesses in my district have been asking me for a long time what will this health insurance reform do for them. I think it is very important that we make it clear to them, for our small businesses that are less than 50 people, it will not require that they provide insurance but rather it will help if they are trying to provide insurance.

For our small businesses, they will be able to get tax incentives to help them pay for that insurance that they are trying to buy for their employees. It will allow them to band together and purchase as a group in a block on an exchange, much like they do with their local chambers of commerce today, to try to get purchasing power against those big insurance companies so they can hold their costs down.

It will also help solve one of the biggest costs they face. Today my small business owners know that they pay the cost of all of the people who use the emergency room for care and can't pay the bills. That is all shifted to our small businesses. With this legislation, that will go away, providing a big help in terms of keeping their costs down and helping our small businesses provide insurance to their employees.

This bill is going to help our small businesses and help all Americans.

HEALTH BILL IS BAD MEDICINE

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have voted for a bill that is a government takeover of the health care system of this country. They talk about all of the good things that they see in the bill that Republicans want to repeal. Republicans want to replace the bad parts of this bill with good things.

The main message of this bill is that it is going to tax us for 10 years for benefits for 6 years. The tax increases begin immediately, the benefits in most cases don't begin for 4 more years, and that is not good news for the American people. We need to put the people in charge of their own health care. We do not need government bureaucrats making decisions for us. This is a bad bill. It is bad medicine for the United States. It is bad medicine for our people, and we are going to do everything we can to replace the bad aspects of the bill with good things.

□ 1030

MAKE MY DAY

(Mr. FILNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FILNER. My Republican friends need to chill out. The previous speaker said this is a government takeover of a health care system. Come on. Let it go. We've got a private system here. We've got a private system of insurance. We've got private hospitals, we've got private doctors. This system is a private system. What government takeover is there?

She keeps talking about a government bureaucrat getting between you and your doctor. What we have now is an insurance bureaucrat between us and our health providers. What we do is remove that. And if you want to repeal this bill, make my day. Try to repeal it.

Repeat the fact that small businesses are going to get tax credits right away. Repeat the fact that our children, who have preexisting conditions, will be able to be insured right away. Repeat the fact that we won't have any more

preexisting conditions to prevent health insurance.

Make my day.

**ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE**

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

**MAJOR CHARLES R. SOLTES, JR.,
O.D. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS BLIND REHABILITA-
TION CENTER**

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4360) to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs blind rehabilitation center in Long Beach, California, as the "Major Charles R. Soltes, Jr., O.D. Department of Veterans Affairs Blind Rehabilitation Center".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4360

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

**SECTION 1. NAME OF DEPARTMENT OF VET-
ERANS AFFAIRS BLIND REHABILITA-
TION CENTER, LONG BEACH, CALI-
FORNIA.**

The Department of Veterans Affairs blind rehabilitation center in Long Beach, California, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the "Major Charles R. Soltes, Jr., O.D. Department of Veterans Affairs Blind Rehabilitation Center". Any reference to such blind rehabilitation center in any law, regulation, map, document, record, or other paper of the United States shall be considered to be a reference to the "Major Charles R. Soltes, Jr., O.D. Department of Veterans Affairs Blind Rehabilitation Center".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4360.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. FILNER. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today to offer my support for H.R. 4360, a bill to name the VA Blind Rehabilitation Center in Long Beach,

California, after the distinguished Iraq veteran Charles R. Soltes.

Mr. Soltes valiantly served his country in the United States Army as a major in the 426th Civil Affairs Battalion in Mosul, Iraq. He died on October 13, 2004, from wounds sustained in a blast conducting a combat patrol in Mosul. He was only 36 years old.

Major Soltes was a graduate of the New England College of Optometry and later completed his residency at Brooke Army Medical Center that focused on ocular trauma, acute eye conditions, medical contact lens applications, and glaucoma care. At West Point, he served as director of the optometry residency program. In 1998, Major Soltes became clinical director of the Irvin Vision Institute, a refractive surgery specialty center where he served until his voluntary deployment in Iraq. He was the first military optometrist to be killed in action while serving as a public health officer in Iraq.

He leaves behind a wife and three young children. Also an optometrist, Major Soltes' wife, Dr. Sally Houg Dang, currently treats blinded veterans as a way to honor her husband.

Naming a VA facility after this hero and a strong veterans advocate is a proper honor for an honorable soldier who made the ultimate sacrifice for his Nation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4360, a bill to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs Blind Rehabilitation Center in Long Beach, California, as the Major Charles R. Soltes, Jr., O.D. Department of Veterans Affairs Blind Rehabilitation Center.

Naming the future blind rehabilitation center currently in its final stages of construction in Long Beach, California, after Major Charles R. Soltes, Jr., is an appropriate expression of our support for our blind veterans.

In 2004 while deployed in Iraq, Major Soltes was serving in the 426th Civil Affairs Battalion in the U.S. Army when the vehicle he was traveling in was struck by an improvised explosive device, costing him his life.

He was the first Army optometrist to be killed in action while on Active Duty, but the legacy Major Soltes leaves behind remains strong with the veteran community, particularly among our blinded veterans. The VA estimates that approximately 157,000 veterans in the United States are legally blind, and over 1 million additional veterans are suffering from debilitating low vision.

Approximately 60 percent of veterans with known combat-related traumatic brain injury and 30 percent with non-combat TBI report visual symptoms. As eye injuries continue to plague our servicemembers overseas, these numbers will continue to rise. And the

work of optometrists like Major Soltes will become increasingly important.

In closing, I would like to express my deepest condolences and heartfelt appreciation to Major Soltes' family for their sacrifice. It's my sincerest wish that through the facility, the service and sacrifice of Major Soltes will not be forgotten, and his dedication to country and mankind will live on in the increased health and well-being of our Nation's blinded veterans.

I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) as much time as he might consume.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Madam Speaker, today I rise in honor of an American patriot for his service and his sacrifice to our country, Major Charles Robert Soltes of Irvine, California, the son of Colonel Soltes, who is now retired. Major Soltes had a distinguished career in the United States Army as well as in the city of Irvine, I might add, where he practiced medicine. It was in Irvine where he entered into private practice as an optometrist and set down his roots to raise a family.

Dr. Soltes subsequently joined the Army Reserve and was deployed to Iraq in 2004. He worked tirelessly as a public health officer in the 426th Civil Affairs Battalion building and upgrading hospitals for the Iraqi people.

On his way back from a hospital visit, his convoy was attacked by an improvised explosive device, and Major Soltes was killed on October 13, 2004. He was the first Army optometrist to be killed in action while on Active Duty. As such, it seems fitting that we honor him and his family by naming a soon-to-be-completed Veterans Affairs blind rehabilitation center in Long Beach, California, at the veterans hospital there, which is in my congressional district.

Once this facility is completed, the blind rehabilitation center, it will work to deliver the same compassion and care that Dr. Soltes dedicated his entire career and gave his life for. This new 24-bed inpatient-outpatient facility, which is expected to be completed this year, will be the first purpose-built blind rehabilitation center in the national Veterans Administration, and as I say, it's located in my district, for which I have great pride.

Dr. Soltes was a graduate of New England College of Optometry. He entered the U.S. Army Medical Service Corps in 1994 and treated members of the military here in the United States as well as abroad. He was well liked and respected by his colleagues. One of his superiors, Colonel Adams, whom he met while he was going through officer basic training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, said of him, "He was a tremendous young man. He volunteered to go into Civil Affairs, and every email he sent was upbeat and positive, and he felt he was making a real difference in the lives of the Iraqi people."