

#### MEDICARE PART D: A FLAWED HEALTHCARE POLICY

(Mr. BISHOP of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Mr. Speaker, two new reports released yesterday make an open and shut case that the Medicare part D drug benefit is inadequate to meet the needs of America's seniors. One report indicates that drug prices are increasing at four times the rate of inflation. The other report shows that the VA, which negotiates with the drug companies for better pricing, is paying 46 percent less for brand-name drugs than the prices listed by Medicare plans for the same drugs.

Is there any better proof that we should have allowed the government to negotiate for lower prices when we had the chance? How can we explain or justify these exorbitant drug price increases to seniors? The drug companies say it is not their fault and blame the insurance companies, who return blame to the drug companies.

There is really nowhere else to turn except to the Medicare bill, which continues to disappoint, frustrate and anger seniors. Part D works just fine for the drug companies and the HMOs, but it is not working for those seniors who, through no fault of their own, haven't signed up for a plan and will pay for the consequences of a bad plan for the rest of their lives.

Like our energy policy, which coddles oil companies earning record profits, the Republicans' flawed health care policy built around part D rewards the pharmaceutical industry, another coddled industry, at the expense of one of the most vulnerable segments of our population, our seniors.

#### NEEDED LEGISLATION

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as we work toward completing our appropriations work, I think it is important to acknowledge that there are some policy questions of concern.

I have introduced legislation to address the signing statements of the Executive, the President, which allows the President not to veto legislation when he is opposed, but really to send out signing statements that then causes the executive branch to totally ignore the laws of Congress. If we are to have a separation of powers, we need to make sure that Congress has its own powers to pass its laws and have them applied.

I also think it is important to acknowledge that the no-knock decision by the Supreme Court is in and of itself unconstitutional, and I will be writing legislation to put back in place that

the fourth amendment is truly constitutional.

It is important, as well, as we debate the immigration issue that we bring down the tone of divisiveness, and I hope to file a sense of Congress resolution that would encourage all Members of Congress not to divide us on the debate of immigration.

I hope we will pass legislation as well that says no amnesty should be given to those in Iraq who kill American soldiers. I will be introducing legislation on that as well.

#### CONGRATULATING THE MIAMI HEAT ON WINNING THE NBA CHAMPIONSHIP

(Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, on a lighter note, it has been said that there is no "I" in "teamwork." Indeed, a successful team beats with one heart. So, I rise today to congratulate the entire Miami Heat organization, Micky Arison, head coach Pat Riley, the Heat players and the entire Miami community for beating with one heart and winning the 2006 National Basketball Association championship.

The Heat became only the third team in NBA history to win the final series after being down two to nothing. For four games in a row, they were too hot to handle.

I know that I speak for Heat fans throughout south Florida and across the country when I say that the Heat could not have made us more proud last night. The entire Heat organization overcame a great deal of individual and collective adversity throughout the season. Yet despite doubters, they proved to have the hearts of champions.

The Heat victory was a true tapestry, comprised of the youthful talent of Finals Most Valuable Player Dwayne Wade and the veteran leadership of Alonzo Mourning, Shaquille O'Neal and Gary Payton. This team truly is 15 strong.

Congratulations to the Heat fans in south Florida, who have patiently waited 18 years for a championship parade on Biscayne Boulevard. There are no fans more deserving.

#### INCREASE FEDERAL MINIMUM WAGE

(Mr. BLUMENAUER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, the Federal minimum wage is now the lowest that it has been, adjusted for inflation, in over 50 years. Here in Congress we have not made an adjustment; we have not given the lowest-income, most hard-pressed economic citizens of our country any raise since 1997.

I thought for a moment that there was a glimpse of hope as we have seen

a proposal that finally passed in the Appropriations Committee that would have made in order an amendment that would have raised it gradually from \$5.15 to \$7.25 an hour. But now we see this is tied up in partisan politics, and it looks as though the Republican leadership is not going to allow the House of Representatives to vote on giving low-income Americans a salary increase.

Mr. Speaker, in my State of Oregon the voters have gone ahead and passed a statewide initiative that provides an automatic increase in the minimum wage, taking it out of politics. It is supported by our public, it is good for our economy, and it is good for our citizens. I hope we can do the same here in Congress.

#### REDUCING AMERICA'S DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN OIL

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, in 2003, we spent \$103 billion buying oil from nondemocratic countries, such countries as Iran, Syria and Venezuela, hardly American allies by any stretch, and, in fact, people who in some ways are funding the war against us in the war on terrorism.

We need fuel independence. We need to pass the bipartisan H.R. 4409, which accelerates the market towards flex-fuel vehicles, ethanol-run vehicles, hybrids, and an assortment of other energy-saving measures. It will, in fact, by the year 2020 reduce our dependence on foreign oil by 20 percent.

We need to drive by a cornfield and say, that is our next tank of gas. The technology is already out there. In Brazil, 40 percent of the cars run on ethanol. In America, only 3 percent of them do.

What we need to do is make it so that this technology is affordable and practical for all households in America. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor and pass H.R. 4409.

#### HONORING POLICE LIEUTENANT GREGORY BENNERSON

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker and colleagues, as I rise this morning, my Virgin Islands community is paying a fond but sad farewell to a favorite son of St. Croix, Police Lieutenant Gregory Bennerson.

Just to speak of his years as a policeman and rise to the position of commander of criminal investigations does not do full justice to his life and contributions. He dedicated much of his free time to youth and involved himself in many activities that uplifted and guided them to be the best they could be.