

CAFTA

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

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, NAFTA is the template on which this CAFTA agreement has been forged. Let us use the documented results of NAFTA to predict what will happen if Congress passes this latest flawed trade agreement.

Workers will see a decrease in real wages. The statistics are very clear.

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Number 2, CAFTA cannot reduce the number of immigrants. In fact, quite the contrary. What we have had in Mexico, for instance, as our prime example is 1.3 million agricultural jobs were lost to NAFTA. Look at the commitments, look at the promises by the past administration, by this administration, and what we have done is increased immigration across the borders. Some of our friends are talking out of both sides of their mouths.

The gap between the rich and the poor will increase. The redistribution of wealth upward will be exacerbated here in the United States under CAFTA, because more family wage jobs will be sent overseas, replaced by low-wage, Wal-Mart-type service jobs. Get it?

Those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it. If CAFTA passes, doom will be the operative function of this Congress.

MYTHS AND FACTS ON REPUBLICAN MEDICAL MALPRACTICE LEGISLATION

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

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to debunk a couple of myths that we will probably hear today driving the debate over medical malpractice, H.R. 5.

Myth number 1: There is an explosion of malpractice lawsuits that are driving up premiums. Not true. A study by Kaiser Family Foundation found that lawsuits are not the cause of doctors' high premiums. In fact, another recent study found that insurers increased their premiums while claims went down.

Myth number 2: Malpractice lawsuits are the cause of rising health care costs. Not true. According to the CBO, malpractice costs amount to less than 2 percent of overall health care spending. Thus, even a reduction of 25 to 30 percent in malpractice costs would lower health care costs by a minuscule 5 percent.

Myth number 3: The malpractice bill is about weeding out frivolous lawsuits. Not true. The proposed limits on damages would apply to all cases, no matter how serious the injury was or how egregious by the doctor, hospital, nursing home, or drug manufacturer.

Any time we are talking about taking away the rights of Americans, you

have to be measured and cautious, something House Republicans are unwilling to do.

I urge my colleagues to vote "no" on H.R. 5.

GOP SOCIAL SECURITY PLAN CUTS BENEFITS AND CONTINUES TO RAID THE SOCIAL SECURITY TRUST FUND

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last month a few congressional Republicans unveiled a Social Security privatization plan that cuts guaranteed Social Security benefits and continues to raid the Social Security Trust Fund.

The Republican majority's Social Security plan includes a privatization tax that would cut guaranteed benefits for the people who need it most. This effectively replaces part of our guaranteed benefit with a private account and leaves us worse off, depending on the whims of the stock market. And anybody who has had stock during the last 2 years knows what that is.

Then, instead of protecting the Social Security Trust Fund, the Republican majority plans to take money out of the trust fund to pay for private accounts. The same congressional Republicans will raid \$670 billion more from the Social Security Trust Fund to pay for tax breaks for the wealthy.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot continue this same type of abuse. We urge all of the Members to look twice at Social Security and save it for the people.

INSURANCE COMPANIES RESPONSIBLE FOR HUGE MALPRACTICE INSURANCE PREMIUMS, NOT INJURED PATIENTS

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

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, today the House will vote on legislation Republicans claim will help doctors and help reduce the cost of health care. As a family doctor, I know their rhetoric could not be further from the truth.

Republicans say that capping what an injured patient can receive in compensation is a cure-all to our health care woes, but they ignore one essential fact, that it is the insurance industry, not payments to patients, that is chasing doctors out of their offices.

A report released in May shows that the 15 leading malpractice insurers increased their premiums on doctors by 120 percent. No surprise there. What is surprising is that the insurance companies' own documents show that payouts over this same period stayed flat, increasing by less than 6 percent, and some companies' payouts went down.

This just confirms what every reliable study has shown: There is no explosion of malpractice claims or pay-

outs. They are not the cause of rising premiums. It appears insurance rates are the major problem.

The Republicans refuse to talk about insurance reform. There is not one word in H.R. 5 about the insurance industry. Rather than really addressing the problem, Republicans would rather limit the rights of injured patients.

Vote "no" on H.R. 5.

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR WIDENS INVESTIGATION INTO CIA AGENT IDENTITY SCANDAL

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, for 2 years now, the White House has engaged in a cover-up of who leaked the identity of an undercover CIA agent. Two years ago, President Bush said he wanted to know who had leaked Valerie Plame's identity to reporters, and he said whoever it was would be fired.

Today we learned the special prosecutor has widened his investigation to see if any laws were broken when the White House tried to discredit allegations that President Bush used faulty intelligence to justify the Iraq war.

Now, this entire investigation centers around national security. White House officials jeopardized our national security when they outed a CIA agent's name. They also jeopardized our national security when they tried to discredit anyone who did not support their faulty intelligence that took us to war in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, this investigation should never have been needed in the first place. If the President's words had meant something, this would have been completed a long time ago.

KEEPING AMERICAN IDEALS ALIVE THROUGH CAFTA

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

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, 20 years ago, the Caribbean and Central America were inflamed with a virus that we called communism. It was in its ascendancy. Thanks to the courageous vision and leadership of President Ronald Reagan and many on both sides of the aisle in this Congress, the people of the United States of America invested in freedom.

Now, 20 years hence, we see fledgling democracies, even democracies that have sent soldiers to stand with our soldiers in Operation Iraqi Freedom. It is that nightmare turned into a dream of democracy that is at stake today in the vote on the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

Having stood with those who stood for freedom 20 years ago, let us not in this Congress and in this Nation turn our backs today on those same fledgling democracies that are embracing our principles of free market economics and freedom. Say yes to freedom in