

Central America. Vote "yes" on CAFTA, and keep the dream of ever-expanding democracy and American ideals in our hemisphere alive.

ENERGY BILL IS SUBSIDY FEST

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, the Wall Street Journal yesterday: It is bad enough that the energy bill has become a subsidy fest that will raise gasoline prices in more places than it reduces them, and they go on from there.

The so-called energy policy to be adopted tomorrow will raise prices at the pump for American consumers, it will increase our dependence, and this is from the Bush administration's own projections over the next 20 years on foreign oil, on Saudi Arabia and those other wonderful folks in the Middle East.

It will do nothing to mandate increases in fuel efficiency so American consumers will have better choices. It will not fund any significant amount of money for alternative fuel research or alternative technologies, or transitional technologies to move us to energy self-sufficiency.

Finally, guess what? We are going to write the American people a bill for this piece of work. The American people are going to be asked to borrow \$15 billion and give it as a gift to the suffering oil, gas, and coal industry, those who have cash reserves that exceed the subsidy that they are about to get.

SMALL BUSINESSES NEED HEALTH COVERAGE

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise to applaud the House for passing H.R. 525, the Small Business Health Fairness Act of 2005 yesterday, which will help provide better access to health care coverage for small businesses.

Small businesses and self-employed citizens have long been an integral and valuable part of the American economy. We should assist in their growth and improvement in whatever ways we can.

The primary achievement of this bill will be the establishment of certified Federal Association Health Plans, or AHPs. AHPs will increase small business bargaining power with health care providers and allow them to offer the kind of health care coverage that big business has long been able to provide.

Second, AHPs will give employers freedom from costly State-mandated benefit packages. Taken together, these features of the new AHPs will enlarge the number of insured Americans up to 8 million people.

As Republicans, we are working to increase the number of insured Americans, since as many as one in seven Americans is uninsured. Moreover, the

most recent U.S. census statistics show that increases in the number of uninsured employees comes solely from declining coverage in the small business sector.

The Small Business Health Fairness Act is a strong step in the right direction, and I am pleased to have passed it.

CAFTA WILL CAUSE LOSS OF MANUFACTURING JOBS IN THE UNITED STATES

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

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the House of Representatives today or tonight will vote on ratifying the Central American-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement, also known as CAFTA. This treaty will follow earlier free trade agreements. These agreements caused the poor in all countries to do worse and the wealthy and the rich to do better.

I have traveled, not as a Member of Congress, in a lot of these other countries, particularly Costa Rica, which is a beautiful country with great and friendly people. This CAFTA follows NAFTA and will cause loss of jobs in manufacturing in our country as well as the CAFTA-DR countries, just like it hurt the average folks in Mexico and in our own country.

This CAFTA is not a dream, as it is called; it is really going to be a nightmare if you are a blue-collar worker in our country or in one of these countries.

HEALTH CARE WEEK

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Health Care Week.

Access to affordable health care is one of the most pressing issues facing America today. I applaud our leadership for bringing important legislation to the floor this week that will strengthen access to care for all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, there is no one-size-fits-all solution for America's health care needs. Instead, we must give our citizens the access and ability to choose from a range of health care options.

This week we are voting on legislation to help small businesses provide their workers with affordable health insurance. We are voting on legislation that limits the frivolous medical malpractice lawsuits that are driving doctors out of practice and making it harder for Americans to find care. We are voting on legislation to improve patient safety and a resolution pledging our support for the community health centers that so many rely on for their care.

Mr. Speaker, all of these initiatives speak volumes to the importance con-

gressional Republicans have placed on health care. For us, every week is Health Care Week, and I am proud of our accomplishments on this important issue.

CAFTA WILL ENSLAVE THE CHILDREN OF CENTRAL AMERICA

(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, CAFTA or NAFTA? Most of the American people are confused about this debate on the floor of the House, and I say to my colleagues who will engage in a very limited debate somewhere toward midnight that this may be one of the more challenging votes of this Congress. It is a vote that calls upon your conscience, and I will simply say these few words: Once we vote for CAFTA, we will reinforce the child labor standards and laws and lack of laws in Central America. You will be sending the 3-year-olds, the 4-year-olds, the 5-year-olds into the hard labor of picking agricultural products with no supervision and no regulations whatsoever.

My heart, my conscience refuses to allow me to vote for CAFTA, a free trade bill that will enslave the children of Central America. I will vote a resounding "no," and I ask my corporate leaders in America to stand alongside of those of us who want the kind of trade bill that addresses the child slavery in Central America, forcing girls and boys to work without any, without any, hope and aspirations and the ability to survive.

Vote "no" on CAFTA.

□ 1030

THE HEALTH ACT, COMMON SENSE REFORM

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

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, as insurance premiums continue to rise, doctors, hospitals and other health care providers across the country have been forced to severely limit their practices or close their doors. Until we address this issue with commonsense reforms, many doctors will be unable to afford to serve their communities, and patients will find it increasingly difficult to obtain needed health care.

Today, thanks to the strong leadership of my colleague, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY), Congress has the unique opportunity to address the medical liability crisis occurring throughout our Nation.

The HEALTH Act of 2005 safeguards patients' rights to care through commonsense reforms. First, it promotes the speedy resolution of claims and fairly allocates damages. Second, the

HEALTH Act accurately compensates patient injuries and maximizes patient recovery. Finally, this legislation places reasonable limits on punitive damages and ensures the payment of medical expenses and respects States' rights.

By passing the HEALTH Act of 2005, we will help ensure that doctors spend their time addressing the real needs of American patients.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11.

CAFTA

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, America must build relationships with our neighbors, relationships that benefit both our future and theirs. But CAFTA is one more example of the White House agenda that does neither. It benefits multinational corporations while it devalues workers and communities, putting corporations on equal footing with democratically elected governments. What is this about?

Trade agreements should reflect our national values and our character. CAFTA fails on both measures. Labor and environmental standards must be an integral part of any trade and negotiation, and CAFTA fails. By failing to protect minimum labor rights, including protection for female workers against discrimination, and failing to enforce environmental standards, CAFTA not only benefits the multinational corporations against our communities, our families, and our environment, but it also works against our trading partners. We know that this is wrong.

We must get CAFTA back on track. We must scrap this version, and we must start over. Trade agreements that promise jobs in the U.S. as well as advancing the economies of our neighbors, that is how we must go. Vote against this dog today.

CAFTA GOOD FOR WORKERS AND CONSUMERS OVER THE LONG RUN

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

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, CAFTA has received a lot of criticism from many on the other side, but sometimes critics can be wrong. Does free trade present challenges to consumers and workers? Absolutely. Is it the death knell for manufacturers or textile makers? By no means.

I believe American workers, American products, American ingenuity can compete with any other nation on the planet, and free trade enables us to do it. In so doing, it lowers costs for consumers here and actually creates jobs. That is right, hundreds of thousands of jobs are insourced to this country.

We have all dealt with the pain of local factories shutting down and businesses closing, and it is tragic whenever it happens. But the fact is that even without free trade, businesses close. Free trade makes sure we have a flow of capital and jobs coming into the Nation.

So should we compete in the global economy or let it pass by? I think we should compete. I choose more and better jobs for our constituents. And, Mr. Speaker, this is also a matter of national security. Vote for CAFTA.

PRESIDENT PUTTING POLITICS ABOVE NATIONAL SECURITY

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

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, 2 years ago, President Bush told the American people, if there were a leak out of my administration, I would want to know who it is. That was 2 years ago. It clearly was not a top priority, because if the President really wanted an answer to that question, he would have it by now.

When someone in the White House leaked Plame's identity, they compromised hundreds of intelligence investigations that are now taking place around the world; this at a time when our intelligence-gathering plays a critical component to our national security.

The outing of a CIA agent should be a concern to us all. The President's own father realized the serious implications of outing covert agents. He went as far as to call them almost actions that are treasonous. Now his son refuses to find out who leaked Valerie Plame's name.

President Bush can continue to state that he wants to wait for the grand jury to finish its investigation; but if this was indeed a top priority for the President, he would have an answer by now.

DR-CAFTA

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

Ms. HARRIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to encourage my colleagues to pass the Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement. I have spoken here many times on the benefits of this bill and what it would bring to our Nation and to the State of Florida, but let us remember also the benefits of free trade flow both ways.

Not only would expanded trade opportunities help American businesses, agricultural products, ranchers, and workers by removing expensive trade impediments and leveling the trade playing field; but also with improved conditions, we can look forward to a time when the threat of illegal narcotics, human smuggling, illegal immi-

gration, and other criminal activities is no longer part of the fabric of life in Central America, Mexico, and our southern United States border.

Such a development would contribute to the security of the United States and all of our partners in this hemisphere and would greatly benefit the people of Central America. With greater development, it will contribute to more political stability and a strengthened rule of law for our partners in the DR-CAFTA region, a region that has suffered under the heels of civil war and political corruption for far too long.

With expanded trade, the people of the Central American region will enjoy a higher standard of living and greatly improved work conditions. In the 1980s, Congress cast difficult votes to militarily assist these nations to foster fledgling democracies. Today, these efforts have proven successful, and we are voting to expand our trade opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this critical politically stabilizing act.

CONGRATULATIONS ON CONFERENCE REPORTS

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

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, it has indeed been an incredible week in this Congress, where we have seen the conference reports for the energy bill and the highway bill both completed, and likely they will come to this House this week.

I want to thank the chairman on the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON), who worked so hard on the energy bill. The chairman was fair and listened to all sides of every argument, and I believe he has produced a balanced bill.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, we can neither drill nor conserve our way to energy independence, and indeed this bill addresses that fact and also applies significant attention to alternative energy sources as well as hybrid technology.

I want to thank the chairman of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), for pushing so long on a process that was frequently derailed by politics in the highway bill. I believe he also has got a good product and a product that we can afford. On the 50th anniversary of the interstate highway system, I believe it is appropriate we will be voting to extend the highway reauthorization act this week.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested: