Ms. MAJETTE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House of Representatives unanimously passed H.R. 280, which includes H.R. 1618, establishing the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area. I thank the Committee on Resources and each of the cosponsors from Georgia for their hard work in passing this bill. This has been truly a bipartisan effort, with five Democrats and five Republican cosponsors. I would like to particularly thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LINDER) for his leadership.

The Arabia Mountain legislation will protect the natural, cultural and historical resources of Georgia's granite outcroppings and will preserve the wonders that Arabia Mountain has to offer. The heritage area is a living history lesson, illustrating 7,000 years of human interaction with a unique landscape. Despite its proximity to Atlanta, it includes Panola Mountain, which is pristine land untouched by development, unique granite outcroppings that are more than 400 million years old, and endangered mosses and lichens that top Arabia Mountain itself.

Beyond the natural beauty is a rich cultural history that began when Native Americans quarried these soapstone and granite outcroppings more than 5,000 years ago. By connecting the heritage area's natural, cultural and historical resources through rivers, greenways and parks, this region will rapidly become a popular recreation area for Georgians and all Americans.

I thank my colleagues for recognizing the importance of the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area and for passing H.R. 280.

AMERICAN DIABETES MONTH

(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, November is American Diabetes Month, and it is important that communities throughout our Nation participate in spreading awareness of the facts about the disease. Diabetes is a very serious health problem in America, as two out of three people who suffer from diabetes will die of heart disease or stroke. Diabetes also leads to other complications, including blindness, high blood pressure, kidney disease, nervous system disease, amputations, dental disease, problems in pregnancy and other health risks.

This touches almost every family in every part of America. According to the American Diabetes Association, 13 million people have been diagnosed with the disease and an additional 5.2 million have been estimated to be unaware that they are living with the disease. As for my home State of South Carolina, we have the second highest rate of diabetes in the Nation. Also alarming is that 90 to 95 percent of diabetes cases are developed later in life, but Americans can reduce their risk by eating properly and maintaining regular exercise.

I urge everyone to get the facts about diabetes during November, American Diabetes Month. In conclusion, God bless our troops.

VOTE AGAINST MEDICARE MODERNIZATION BILL

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, we have before us not a simple prescription drug benefit for seniors which they need and which is long overdue, not just a complicated, convoluted, expensive and inadequate benefit for seniors, it is the pharmaceutical promotion and profits protection act. It prohibits any mandated, or even negotiated reductions in the extortionate price of pharmaceuticals. Yes, it would outlaw the Federal Government negotiating for price reductions on behalf of Medicare beneficiaries. It will block seniors who are seeking to import less expensive U.S. manufactured drugs from Canada. It provides a $20 billion subsidy to the private insurance industry to undermine Medicare. It is a cruel hoax targeted on the most vulnerable among us. It is not, as the gentleman from Florida said, bipartisan.

I knew Claude Pepper. I served with Claude Pepper. And FDR, I did not know him, but I know that he passed Social Security without a single Republican vote. And LBJ passed Medicare without support on that side. Now suddenly in defense of the pharmaceutical industry and the private insurance industry, they want to attack Medicare but pretend they are doing this for the good of seniors.

AT&T WIRELESS ANNOUNCES LAYOFFS

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

Mr. EMANUEL. Today in the Wall Street Journal, AT&T Wireless announced that they are going to lay off nearly 10 percent of their workforce, 3,000 employees, and outsource hundreds of other jobs to India. These 3,000 employees will be added to the 9 million Americans who already cannot find work and the 2 million Americans who are defined as long-term unemployed Americans. This economy, although growing, is stalled. As Goldman Sachs recently described, it is not a jobless economy, it is a job-loss recovery. As we have reached record consumer debt and bankruptcy, long-term record unemployment, adding additional employees today by the announcement of AT&T Wireless to lay off 3,000 employees, this economy is not working for middle-class Americans.

There are some in this Chamber who like to spike the ball on the 40-yard line and declare the mission accomplished as it relates to the economy. This economy is not working for middle-class families who find health care costs skyrocketing out of control, college costs skyrocketing out of control, their job in a tenuous position, and their bankruptcy and consumer debt rising faster than they can meet the demands of their family.

Mr. Speaker, I rise and ask that Members of this Chamber focus on the needs of middle-class families and get the economy moving by producing jobs.

WAR IN IRAQ COUNTERPRODUCTIVE TO WINNING WAR ON TERROR

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

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, the war in Iraq has proven to be counterproductive to our goals in winning the war on terror. It has produced an increase in anti-American sentiment all over the world, an increased presence of al Qaeda inside Iraq, and a greater instability in the region. Every day that we are inside Iraq, the situation gets progressively worse as evidenced by the frequent and more sophisticated attacks on our troops. As a result of the escalating terrorist attacks upon our troops, more Americans have died after the end of combat was announced on May 1. The U.S. occupation of Iraq is counterproductive as it is a contributing cause for instability. We simply cannot help the people of Iraq by continuing this occupation, nor can we tolerate talk of a draft to sustain an occupation.

That is why we need to get the U.S. out and the United Nations in.

MEDICARE MARKET BASKET UPDATE FOR HOSPITALS

(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 support of the market basket update to hospitals provided for in the House-Senate Medicare agreement. This legislation will supply a full update for hospitals that submit data for a set of 10 quality indicators.

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Those hospitals that do not submit data would receive updates of 0.4 percent less than the market basket level.

It is imperative that our hospitals and especially, Mr. Speaker, our rural hospitals receive this full update in order to ensure that they maintain the ability to provide needed goods and services.

I stressed the importance of this issue by offering a letter to the Medicare conferees urging them to reject the proposed market basket reduction to hospitals and ensure that the final Medicare legislation delivers unfettered improvements for rural health