

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 accom-

plished 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 COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE 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

care and a full market basket update for hospitals. Over 120 of my colleagues joined me in that effort.

I urge my colleagues to continue to back this provision in the final version of the bill and show support for our hospitals by its passage.

#### IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 253

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, today on the suspension calendar H.R. 253, the Two Floods bill, is an opportunity to reauthorize and reform America's flood insurance program. It is a great opportunity to build on the legacy of the late Hale Boggs from Louisiana who helped create the program because he understood how important it was to a State like his.

The bill passed out of the Committee on Financial Services with a unanimous vote, broad support from bankers, realtors, environmentalists. With the help of the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. BAKER), we assure that the special needs of flood-prone areas are met, that we help people move their homes out of harm's way, that there is more assistance for the States with the biggest problems, and it will reduce the premium pressure, saving money for 4½ million policyholders. Last, but by no means least, these reforms will ultimately mean significant savings in disaster relief costs for the Federal Government.

One percent of the property should not require 25 percent of the loss costs for the entire country. This Bill is a win-win for the economy, for people moved out of harm's way, and for the environment. I urge my colleagues to carefully consider it as it comes forward later today.

#### PRESIDENT BUSH'S TRIP TO GREAT BRITAIN

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

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, King George II's return to Great Britain reminds me of the return of Richard the Lionheart from the Crusades. The President is coming back to England. He says he is going to meet with the families of the bereaved from 9/11. Apparently, he does not know that 400 people have died in the United States in their service in Iraq. He has never seen fit to meet with them.

In less than 1 year, we have lost more people in Iraq than we lost in 3 years in the Vietnam War. But the President has a secret plan he is now revealing. His secret plan is that he is going to declare victory and have the troops out by June 1.

Mr. Speaker, this President is leading us over the cliff with no respect for the people that he has put in harm's way. He ought to come up to Walter

Reed and visit the wounded and then go out and visit some of the families that have lost people in Iraq. To do less than that is to ignore the sacrifice they have made.

#### MEDICARE: INDIGENT CARE

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

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 1.

One of the important provisions in this bill is reimbursement for States and counties that are required to treat illegal immigrants through the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act. This unfunded mandate is breaking the hospitals in my district.

As a border State, we constantly incur costs on our counties that are mandated by the Federal Government but never reimbursed. By Federal law, hospitals must treat any person, regardless of citizenship, in need of medical attention. If the person is a United States citizen, Medicare or Medicaid pays for the treatment, but there is no reimbursement for illegal immigrants. Border hospitals are caving under these costs of providing care daily for illegal immigrants who have no insurance and no ability to pay.

For example, Luna County in my district is often expected to pay for Mexican citizens to be picked up at the border, taken to a hospital and treated, and then returned to the border. Taxpayers are footing the bill for indigent care. This provision ensures that counties and States will receive the money in return for the services the Federal Government requires them to provide.

#### MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

(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, over the next couple of days, in a very rushed and possibly confused effort, this body will bring to the floor a Medicare bill. When we talk to our seniors across the Nation, they believe that this is in response to their desire to have a real, guaranteed Medicare prescription drug benefit. But, Mr. Speaker, what has happened was a closed-door conference with no participation of Democrats, and I want to be convinced that we have something that will help all of our seniors. We have got privatization of Medicare, vouchers for Medicare, big money for pharmaceutical companies, and no guaranteed prescription drug benefit.

President Johnson went out on a limb in 1965 with hardly any Republican support and gave a lifespans to our seniors that they could never imagine. Shame on this body. Shame on the other body if they take this oppor-

tunity to destroy Medicare as we know it and as it can be a better entity for all. Let us get to work as a bipartisan House, two Chambers, producing something that really means a vital lifeline to our seniors.

#### H.R. 1 CONFERENCE REPORT AND THE AARP

(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, I rise to express my profound disappointment with the squandered opportunity we have right now, an opportunity to provide our seniors with the prescription drug coverage they need and they deserve.

But I am just as concerned about the decision made by AARP, the American Association of Retired People, to endorse these misguided policies. I have long been proud of my membership in AARP, but now they have sold out seniors. Now I understand why AARP no longer stands for American Association of Retired People. Perhaps they would like to be known as the American Association of the Republican Party. They no longer represent retirees. They are more concerned about the interests of large drug companies.

I want no part of an organization that is willing to sacrifice its principles for short-term political gain or favors from the majority party, and neither do more than 65 of my colleagues. Today we will surrender our AARP membership, and I urge all of my colleagues who truly care about the needs of seniors to do the same.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHAW). 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 is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later today.

#### EXPRESSING SENSE OF HOUSE REGARDING COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP OF UNIFIED BUDDHIST CHURCH OF VIETNAM

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 427) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the courageous leadership of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam and the urgent need for religious freedom and related human rights in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 427

Whereas Buddhism has a 2,000-year tradition in Vietnam and the Unified Buddhist