

“dual-eligible” beneficiaries, those who qualify for both Medicare and Medicaid; and those in assisted living facilities who take large numbers of pre-packaged medication. Much of the responsibility of ensuring the drug benefit’s implementation has been assumed by the pharmacist. To the extent that it is working at all, we have them to thank. In many ways for many of the pharmacists I spoke with, much of the damage has already been done.

On the horizon, however, are significant cuts to the Medicaid program that will be achieved primarily by changing the way we reimburse pharmacies for prescription drugs. That is right. The choices we made during the budget reconciliation process once again targeted our Nation’s pharmacists, without asking for corresponding sacrifices from the insurance companies or the pharmaceutical manufacturers, which is outrageous.

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It is truly shameful. And the implications will be significant. After absorbing significant losses during the rollout of the Medicare drug program, pharmacists will soon be hit by changes to the Medicaid program, and many simply will not survive. This one-two punch is not only bad policy, it is inexcusable.

Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt even praised pharmacists last week for their “heroic” efforts in shouldering the burden for implementing Medicare Part D. Their reward for their selfless and heroic behavior? Drastic pharmacy reimbursement cuts in the Medicaid program that will have a devastating impact on our communities, disproportionately impacting the poorest and sickest Americans and that will no doubt put hundreds if not thousands of small businesses out of business.

I encourage my colleagues to talk to their pharmacists, learn more about this situation, and work with me in a bipartisan manner to ensure that we are not sacrificing the health of our Nation and the good-will of our community pharmacists by taking the path of least resistance and caving to large and powerful interests.

JOB STATISTICS NOT ACCURATELY TRACKING JOB GROWTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, last night I stood here in the well to talk about our out-of-date job surveys that we have, the payroll versus the household surveys. I discussed the changing nature of job creation in the 21st century economy.

We have evolved into a technologically advanced, upwardly mobile, highly flexible workforce. The types of jobs, the way jobs are created and our

methods for finding new work have all changed dramatically in the 6½ decades since our job surveys were developed; and yet, Mr. Speaker, our surveys remain fundamentally unchanged over that period of time. The result has been job statistics that are increasingly incapable of accurately tracking job growth in a dynamic economy.

This afternoon I would like to talk about another economic indicator that is unable to fully portray the true state of our modern economy, that being the gross domestic product.

Growth in GDP is our broadest measure of economic strength; and, as such, it is perhaps the most commonly cited and heavily relied upon statistic. And yet, like our job surveys, our methods for calculating GDP were developed in the industrial age and have remained unchanged while our economy has been transformed dramatically, as we all know.

The need for assessing and tracking GDP was borne out of the Great Depression. As our Nation faced the worst economic crisis in its history, policymakers found that they lacked the tools to assess whether our economy was getting better or getting worse, so the Department of Commerce began the first accounting of national income and output. In an industrial economy, this meant tallying such tangibles as machines, tractors and buildings.

Purchasing new factory equipment or building a new facility was counted as long-term investment, while spending on research or training was not. For example, AT&T’s investment in Bell Labs where the transistor radio was invented didn’t show up at all in the GDP numbers. Even at the time, the economists who developed the methodology recognized the limitations. But an economy based on heavy industrial manufacturing could be adequately analyzed, by and large, on the basis of tangible, easily identified and easily quantified investments.

However, as we all know, Mr. Speaker, today’s economy is drastically different from the economy that we faced following the Great Depression. Our knowledge-based economy is based on ideas rather than things. Investing in research and development, developing brand equity and exporting best practices are driving successful businesses in our innovation economy. Yet they are absent from our most important measure of economic vitality, and by missing these intangible but fundamentally important factors, our GDP numbers are misleading.

For example, Mr. Speaker, since 2000, the 10 largest U.S. companies that report research and development spending have increased capital spending by only 2 percent. That means that the types of investments that are captured in the GDP calculation, new buildings and more equipment, have been meager over the last half decade. Based on this number, we would be led to believe that some of the country’s greatest engines of growth are stagnating and failing to make long-term investments.

But, Mr. Speaker, these same 10 companies have actually increased R&D, research and development spending, by a whopping 42 percent over that period of time. They are investing rigorously in tomorrow’s innovations, better products, better services, better ways of doing things. Our economy’s creative thinkers are propelling our economy forward and ensuring growth in the future. Yet our old economy calculations miss this good economic news entirely.

To give another example, look at how the value of Apple’s iPod is incorporated into GDP. While superior design, quality and marketing, all developed in my State of California, have led to a global powerhouse brand, the actual product, the iPod, is assembled in China. So when the Commerce Department’s Bureau of Economic Analysis calculates our GDP, it does not count the \$800 million, nearly a billion dollars, that Apple spent in research and development and brand development last year. It merely counts the number of units shipped here from China and sold in the United States. As Business Week put it in an article 2 weeks ago, this sort of accounting reduces Apple, one of the world’s greatest innovators, to nothing but a reseller of imported goods.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that quantifying intangibles like technical innovation and marketing savvy presents some formidable challenges; and adopting hasty changes that make our GDP numbers too confusing or complicated would obviously be no improvement to the status quo. It is essential that we begin to look at ways to make our economic statistics more meaningful by bringing them into the 21st century. We need to do that by looking at these major modifications.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

KEEPING MERCURY OUT OF VACCINATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, over the past couple of weeks in the newspapers and on television and on the radios across this country people have been warned not to eat too much tuna and other seafood because of the mercury content in the fish. They said that women who are pregnant and women and men who are eating a lot of these seafood products could have neurological problems created because they are eating so much seafood with mercury in them.

I think that it is good that they are telling the American people that. But

at the same time that that is going on, our health agencies are allowing mercury to be put into almost every vaccine an adult gets and many of the vaccines that children get.

Since the late 1920s and early 1930s, there has been a product called Thimerosal put into many of the vaccines, in fact, most of the vaccines that people get today. Thimerosal is 50 percent ethyl mercury, and mercury is toxic to the neurological system of the human being. Yet we have talked about this for 4, 5, 6 years now, and we cannot get the mercury out of the vaccines. It is being used as a preservative.

The interesting thing about it is that it has never been tested. You might say it was tested back in 1929, because they said they tested it on 27 people that had meningitis. All of them died from meningitis, but none of them died from the mercury they were being injected with. But they died anyhow from the meningitis. There wasn't enough time to find out about the neurological problems that might ensue because they were having mercury injected into their bodies.

Our children today, before they go to the first grade, get between 25 and 30 shots. Most of those shots used to contain mercury. Now there are only about three or four that contain mercury. Nevertheless, it has caused severe neurological problems in children.

We have gone from where 1 in 10,000 children were found to be autistic to one in 166. It is an absolute epidemic. We have also seen a tremendous increase in people that have Alzheimer's and other neurological diseases. Yet we continue to allow our health agencies to allow the pharmaceutical industry to put mercury into the vaccines going into every single human being into this country, and in particular our military personnel overseas.

Now we are hearing about the bird flu, Mr. Speaker, and we are going to spend billions of dollars preparing this country for a possible bird flu epidemic. That means they are going to create vaccines, and those vaccines, in all probability, will have mercury in them, which means that every single person that is vaccinated with the bird flu vaccine will probably be getting Thimerosal in them, which is 50 percent ethyl mercury.

It does cause severe neurological problems when it is given over a long period of time. Your brain accumulates this mercury. It doesn't chelate out of the body in a very efficient way. So if you get 10 shots, that mercury stays and keeps building up, and it gets worse and worse as time goes by. The health agencies know this is a problem, and yet we continue to allow mercury to be put into these vaccines.

So today, since the people of this country are being warned about not eating too much fish that contains mercury like tuna and so forth, I think it is high time that the health agencies of this country get the mercury out of all vaccines that are being injected

into children and adults in this country because of the danger to their neurological system. It is extremely important.

It can be done. This Thimerosal is supposedly a preservative. If we go to single shot vials, which don't cost much more than the multi-shot vials being used, you can take the mercury out of them because you don't need that preservative in there, you don't need that kind of purifying agent, if you will, in that vaccine.

It is extremely important, Mr. Speaker, that we get mercury out of all vaccines. Right now, with the warnings being given to people not to eat too much fish with mercury in them, it is high time our health agencies get mercury out of all vaccines.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SCHIFF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURGESS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

RAISING CONCERNS ABOUT UNITED ARAB EMIRATES' TAKING OVER U.S. PORTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the House's attention a transaction that is being contemplated on five of our major ports, five important ports of entry in the United States. New Orleans, Miami, Newark, Philadelphia and New York are all being considered as an asset to be transferred to the United Arab Emirates soon after review of the transactional details.

I am concerned about this transaction for several reasons. First and foremost, it has occurred under what is called Council for Foreign Investments, as it is known, chaired by the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Snow, and multiple agencies of the United States Government to review transactions launched by foreign entities to purchase assets here in the United States.

Why am I concerned about the United Arab Emirates' ownership and potential management of our ports of entry, these five strategic ports? For many reasons.

Just yesterday, it was reported that the United Arab Emirates was in negotiations urging a more robust trade relationship with Iran. Just yesterday, they were making a decision to move

forward with a more robust trading platform with Iran.

I am sure most of our colleagues realize that in recent days we have gone to enormous lengths to convince our allies and our friends around the world to put pressure on Iran in order to reduce the likelihood of their using nuclear weapons or building nuclear capabilities. So at a time when we are trying to get our international partners to put pressure on Iran, the United Arab Emirates is doing the exact opposite by encouraging and engaging in trade debate with Iran.

The United Arab Emirates has worked with us since 9/11 on helping us fight the War on Terror, but it has always been well known and documented that a number of the terrorist activity planning and financing was taking place in these very countries that would now have control of our ports.

In this country, if we were asked to turn over our airport security to another foreign national, people would be rightfully outraged. But in this particular transaction, we cannot seem to get any information as to what are the requirements of security, what are the requirements for people and personnel who would be employed there, what are the kind of safeguards of inspection of cargo.

I have long stated my concern on port security. I feel we have failed to adequately secure cargo coming into this country. Now I am told in my inquiry to Secretary Snow that they couldn't really answer any of my questions yesterday in the committee because it was a more secretive or at least private transaction that could not be commented on.

As a Member of Congress, it bothers me that we have a transaction being considered and contemplated where we have no information provided to Members of Congress.

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Tomorrow, President Bush travels to my home State of Florida, and he will visit the port of Tampa, not a port being considered for sale, but a port nonetheless, a very important port of commerce in the State of Florida.

I hope the President as he flies to Florida will contemplate the utilization of the law known as Exxon-Florio, which allows the President to intercede and stop a transfer of assets if it is reflected to be of some national security concern.

We have recently seen, because of the outpouring of opposition to the Chinese Government's acquisition of a United States domestic oil producer, we have seen that deal unravel because of domestic pressure on not allowing the Chinese Government to take ownership of a domestic refinery operation.

Now, I hope the same outrage is expressed by our constituents in trying to figure out what is involved in this transaction. How can we bring to fruition, at least we hope, a termination of these engagements, and continue the