

As a father of three extraordinary women myself, all of whom are athletes, I can attest Hannah and Jenny represent the pride that every parent who drops their kids off at an athletic practice or attends one of their competitions feels.

It is an amazing honor to see two of our own in Colorado rise to this level, especially knowing it could not have happened to two better people.

Hannah Warfield and Jenny Barringer embody the best our country could hope for in the next generation of Americans.

I am privileged for the opportunity to have come to know these two remarkable individuals.

I would like to close by saying go USA, and go Jenny in the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

TRIBUTE TO CAPTAIN PHIL RUHLE

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my sympathies to a wonderful Rhode Island family who has lost a devoted loved one: Captain Phil Ruhle of North Kingstown, Rhode Island.

Captain Ruhle was a life-long professional fisherman and the captain of the *Sea Breeze* that capsized off the coast of New Jersey last Wednesday night. He was the center of 5 generations of fishermen, including his grandfather, his father, his brother, his son, and grandson.

In recent years, Captain Ruhle took an active role in work to improve industry conditions for fishermen. He was even awarded NOAA's Environmental Hero Award in 2003 for his "tireless efforts to preserve and protect our Nation's environment." Captain Ruhle was instrumental in developing the innovative "Eliminator" net, which will benefit fishermen and our environment for generations.

Captain Ruhle was valued as an intelligent and passionate advocate and adviser for fishermen across the country. His presence, especially his familiar voice, will be missed by his fellow fishermen, by Federal fishing regulators and by all who cared about the future of the fishing industry.

I share in the sorrow at the loss of Captain Ruhle with his wife Donna, his mother Gloria, his children Phil, Jr., Roger and Alicia, all his grandchildren and his many friends and colleagues. While this is a sad time for all of us, we take solace in knowing that Captain Ruhle lived his life to the fullest and left behind him a world which, because of his life, was kinder, more passionate and more generous.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH: OUR SENIORS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES DESERVE A RELIABLE, AFFORDABLE AND UNIVERSAL RX BENEFIT UNDER MEDICARE!

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, the insurance and pharmaceutical industry-friendly

Medicare Part D drug benefit is, as predicted, costing taxpayers billions of unnecessary dollars, restricting access to needed pharmaceuticals, and providing windfall profits for the pharmaceutical companies. Last week, the Oversight and Government Reform Committee released an analysis that showed that pharmaceuticals covered under Part D cost 30 percent more than pharmaceuticals provided through Medicaid. Medicaid's program is administered by the Federal Government while Medicare Part D uses private insurance companies. As you know, it also provides no authority to negotiate prices, no other meaningful cost mechanisms, and a paltry benefit for far too many enrollees to boot.

A report by the Center for Economic and Policy Research showed that a benefit administered by Medicare would save enough money to fully cover prescription drug costs between 2006 and 2013 and still have \$40 billion left over.

For our seniors and for our children and grandchildren's future security, I urge you to reaffirm your support for one of the most successful social programs in our Nation's history by calling for a comprehensive and meaningful prescription drug benefit under Medicare, and one which addresses the outrageously high prices of prescription drugs paid by American consumers.

I have introduced a bill that will replace the current plan with a benefit that provides seniors and people with disabilities with the drugs they need with no co-pay, no premium and no deductible. Every person would receive the same voluntary benefit, regardless of income or geographical location, just like traditional Medicare.

How can the plan provide such a strong benefit without busting the budget? By including provisions that seriously address the outrageously high prices Americans are forced to pay for prescription drugs.

First, the plan will include strong, loophole-free language to allow American pharmacists, wholesalers and distributors to purchase FDA-approved prescription drugs at lower prices abroad. With strong reimportation language like that included in this plan, all Americans—not just seniors—could save 30–70 percent on the price of prescription drugs without any Government subsidy.

Second, the bill also allows Medicare to negotiate on behalf of all Medicare beneficiaries, something prohibited under the current Republican program, which could achieve discounts comparable to the significant discounts received by the Veterans Administration.

Finally, the plan would ensure that when taxpayers foot the bill for research and development of a prescription drug, the pharmaceutical industry must offer that drug at a fair and reasonable price. Such a requirement has passed the House by a wide bipartisan majority in the past, only to be stripped out by the pharmaceutical industry in conference committee. Today, the taxpayer-funded National Institutes of Health continues to spend tens of billions of dollars a year on research and development of medicines. Most often, this R&D is then handed over to the pharmaceutical industry, whose member companies charge Americans any price they want for the final product. If we change this absurd system, we would ensure that new medicines would be affordable in the years ahead.

As the current crisis makes all too clear, the time has come to support a comprehensive

prescription drug benefit for seniors and people with disabilities that does not coddle the health insurance or pharmaceutical industries.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MICHAEL R. TURNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 556 and 557, I was not present. On 556 I would have voted "no," and on 557, I would have voted "yes."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIM MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 557, H.R. 6633, the Employee Verification Amendment Act of 2008, had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 31, 2008

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1338) to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Chairman, I rise today as a co-sponsor of H.R. 1338, the Paycheck Fairness Act.

Last week, I had the honor of participating in a portrait unveiling ceremony for former New Jersey Representative Mary Norton, who was the chair of the Labor Committee 70 years ago and a tireless advocate for equal pay. Under her leadership Congress passed 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act that established the 40-hour workweek, outlawed child labor and established a minimum wage of 25 cents per hour. I think of her today when I say that while we have made significant progress since the Equal Pay Act of 1963, the fight for equality in the workplace is far from over. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, women still earn only 77 percent as much as men on average. These statistics are worse for women of color; African-American women earn only 71.7 cents and Latinas only 58.5 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterparts.

Unfortunately, this wage gap only increases over time and has lasting effects on the lives of our working women. While women 1 year out of college earn 80 percent of what their male peers make, by the time women are 10 years out of college they are making only 69 percent of what men do. Furthermore, after a lifetime of receiving lower wages, older women are less likely than older men to receive pension income, and when they do they receive

only half of the benefits that men receive. It is then sad, but unsurprising, that women represent 70 percent of older adults living in poverty.

Mary Norton understood that the wage gap is not just a women's issue—it is a family issue. When women earn less for equal work, families are forced to do more with less. Affording all of life's expenses is challenging enough—it shouldn't be made harder as a result of women being shortchanged on payday.

I believe that there is more that can and should be done to level the playing field and provide fair opportunities for women in education and the workplace. I would like to commend my colleague from Connecticut, Representative ROSA DELAURO, for introducing H.R. 1338, the Paycheck Fairness Act. This bill would strengthen the Equal Pay Act and close loopholes that allow employers to avoid responsibility for discriminatory pay and prohibit employers from retaliating against employees who discuss salary information with their co-workers. It would also create a training program to strengthen women's negotiation skills and establish additional avenues for women to seek equal pay in the workplace.

This legislation is long overdue and I urge my colleagues to support it.

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE THE US 36 CORRIDOR PROJECT

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing a resolution to recognize the benefits of the United States Route 36, US 36, Corridor project plan, and to commend the cooperative effort of several communities located along the US 36 Corridor between Denver and Boulder in developing the project.

The Colorado communities along the US 36 Corridor, including Westminster, Louisville, Superior, Broomfield, Denver, and Boulder, are experiencing a tremendous period of expansion. While this growth is very positive and certainly welcome, it has also outpaced the growth of its transportation infrastructure, leading to heavy traffic delays and sometimes dangerous road conditions.

In response to these conditions, the US 36 Mayors and Commissioners Coalition, MCC, a coalition of officials representing the communities along the US 36 Corridor, in coordination with the Colorado Department of Transportation, CDOT, and a coalition of local businesses known as 36 Commuting Solutions, developed the US 36 Corridor project plan.

The US 36 Corridor project is a national model for congestion mitigation, combining bus rapid transit lanes, high-occupancy vehicle lanes and safe bicycling lanes with traditional auto traffic lanes. The project ranked among the highest congestion mitigation proposals submitted under the Department of Transportation's Urban Partnership Agreement Program, and a record of decision is expected to be issued next year that will allow for its construction to commence.

Madam Speaker, I think the cooperation and ingenuity that was demonstrated in putting the

US 36 Corridor project together, as well as the project's benefits, deserve recognition from Congress, as this resolution does.

INTRODUCTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH PERSONNEL APPEALS PROCEDURAL CONSOLIDATION ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the Legislative Branch Personnel Appeals Procedural Consolidation Act of 2008 to bring the GAO in line with other legislative branch agencies and to address an important issue of equal rights at Government Accountability Office, GAO, after extensive consultation with all concerned. Over the past year my office has worked closely with the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform to resolve serious employee wage and discrimination disputes at the GAO. African Americans, and older employees who have been disproportionately affected by these disputes and have complained that discrimination cases at GAO must be heard internally, the only grievance system where Federal employee charges of discrimination are processed and determined within a Federal agency without any independent review. This bill resolves this unique conflict of interest and due process issue that allows GAO to render the final administrative decisions on discrimination, labor and other issues against the GAO with the agency head appointing all the decision-makers in the process and no review by any disinterested or third-party agency official.

The wage disputes and complaints about the grievance system began when the GAO implemented dramatic and controversial pay-for-performance revisions to classify and pay its employees. The Comptroller General assured GAO employees that the annual COLAs that Congress votes for all federal employees would not be affected. However, many employees, including a disproportionate number of African Americans, did not receive their COLAs for FY06 and FY07, though all had ratings of "meets expectations" or above.

Consequently, GAO employees filed formal race and age discrimination complaints against the Comptroller General with the Personnel Appeals Board, PAB, which hears all such complaints. The PAB members are appointed by the Comptroller General to decide not only discrimination cases based on race, sex, age and religion, but also cases involving violations of labor, and of civil service or merit system rights. All other Federal and legislative branch employees carry employee complaints to independent agencies.

It was the excellent work of Chairman DANNY K. DAVIS and the Federal Workforce subcommittee, whose hearings uncovered the discriminatory effects of the pay system and negotiated back-COLA payments for all GAO employees. An independent assessment by the Ivy Group, hired by GAO after the watchdog organization, Blacks In Government, recommended a study of discrimination at the GAO, showed that there are many race-based disparities in ratings, promotions and other employment practices between African Amer-

ican and Caucasian analysts at the GAO. For example, having a PhD has a statistically significant positive effect for Caucasian analysts, but has no effect for African American analysts, and Caucasian analysts receive a ratings benefit from being assigned to lead roles on projects, contrasted with African American analysts, who show no statistically significant effect of being assigned to such roles.

This bill provides for independent review of complaints by transferring jurisdiction to the OOC, which handles such matters for all other legislative branch employees. The OOC represents the most recent bipartisan thinking and action of Congress concerning equal treatment for employees of the legislative branch. Because of the small case loads generated by legislative branch agencies, the OOC is able to handle the broadest enforcement mandate of any executive or legislative agency and currently enforces 12 different employee protection laws and is the only employee protection agency required by statute to continuously review new laws and incorporate them into its own jurisdiction.

The bill does not assign responsibilities to an agency beyond its expertise and does not put additional responsibility on the congressional leadership to make appointments. The OOC has indicated the feasibility of its participation and offered evidence that the statute that established the OOC contemplates granting additional authority to the OOC of the kind we seek.

I hope all my colleagues join me in assuring equal rights to GAO employees.

INTRODUCTION OF THE VIRGINIA OCS BILL

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, August 1, 2008

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, each week, folks across Virginia and the Nation are confronted with the rising cost of energy, from the cost at the pump to soaring electric bills. Energy is vital to every sector of our economy, including homes, small businesses and industries. When energy supplies are tight, families and businesses are severely impacted by the resulting increase in energy costs.

While the majority has succeeded in strangling any efforts to tap into traditional energy resources in America, our Nation's citizens have suffered. They have suffered with skyrocketing gas and food prices, and they have suffered from the fear that we are ever dependent on foreign, and sometimes hostile, sources of oil.

While the leadership of the majority in Congress can't seem to get its act together to solve this problem for the Nation, as a representative of the people of Virginia, I cannot stand by and simply watch this spectacle. The time for action is now.

Virginians understand that a major component in lessening energy costs is to produce more energy. In fact the topic of energy production on Virginia's Outer Continental Shelf, OCS, has received serious discussion by the Virginia General Assembly. I believe that Virginia should have every tool available to access its energy supplies. Unfortunately, a congressional moratorium on exploration of the