

in order to access that person's bank accounts, credit cards, and other financial assets. Many Americans have lost their life savings and had their credit destroyed as a result of identity theft. Yet the Federal Government continues to encourage such crimes by mandating use of the Social Security number as a uniform ID!

The Identity Theft Prevention Act also prevents the Federal Government from establishing any form of national ID. In 2005, Congress attempted to turn state driver's licensing into a national ID; however, resistance to this unconstitutional and costly mandate on the states has been so intense that today, for all intents and purposes, the Real ID mandate has been nullified. The Identity Theft Prevention Act simply puts the nail in the coffin of the Real ID and similar schemes, thus protecting Americans from having their liberty, property, and privacy violated by private and public sector criminals.

Some members of Congress will claim that the federal government needs the power to monitor Americans in order to allow the government to operate more efficiently. I would remind my colleagues that, in a constitutional republic, the people are never asked to sacrifice their liberties to make the jobs of government officials easier. We are here to protect the freedom of the American people, not to make privacy invasion more efficient.

Mr. Speaker, while I do not question the sincerity of those members who suggest that Congress can ensure that citizens' rights are protected through legislation restricting access to personal information, the only effective privacy protection is to forbid the federal government from mandating national identifiers. Legislative "privacy protections" are inadequate to protect the liberty of Americans for a couple of reasons.

First, it is simply common sense that repealing those federal laws that promote identity theft is more effective in protecting the public than expanding the power of the federal police force. Federal punishment of identity thieves provides cold comfort to those who have suffered financial losses and the destruction of their good reputations as a result of identity theft.

Federal laws are not only ineffective in stopping private criminals, but these laws have not even stopped unscrupulous government officials from accessing personal information. After all, laws purporting to restrict the use of personal information did not stop the well-publicized violations of privacy by IRS officials or the FBI abuses of the Clinton and Nixon administrations.

In one of the most infamous cases of identity theft, thousands of active-duty soldiers and veterans had their personal information stolen, putting them at risk of identity theft. Imagine the dangers if thieves are able to obtain the universal identifier, and other personal information, of millions of Americans simply by breaking, or hacking, into one government facility or one government database?

Second, the federal government has been creating proprietary interests in private information for certain state-favored special interests. Perhaps the most outrageous example of phony privacy protection is the "medical privacy" regulation, that allows medical researchers, certain business interests, and law enforcement officials access to health care information, in complete disregard of the Fifth

Amendment and the wishes of individual patients! Obviously, "privacy protection" laws have proven greatly inadequate to protect personal information when the government is the one seeking the information.

Any action short of repealing laws authorizing privacy violations is insufficient primarily because the federal government lacks constitutional authority to force citizens to adopt a universal identifier for health care, employment, or any other reason. Any federal action that oversteps constitutional limitations violates liberty because it ratifies the principle that the federal government, not the Constitution, is the ultimate judge of its own jurisdiction over the people. The only effective protection of the rights of citizens is for Congress to follow Thomas Jefferson's advice and "bind (the federal government) down with the chains of the Constitution."

Mr. Speaker, those members who are not persuaded by the moral and constitutional reasons for embracing the Identity Theft Prevention Act should consider the American people's opposition to national identifiers. The numerous complaints over the ever-growing uses of the Social Security number show that Americans want Congress to stop invading their privacy. Furthermore, according to a survey by the Gallup company, 91 percent of the American people oppose forcing Americans to obtain a universal health ID.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I once again call on my colleagues to join me in putting an end to the federal government's unconstitutional use of national identifiers to monitor the actions of private citizens. National identifiers threaten all Americans by exposing them to the threat of identity theft by private criminals and abuse of their liberties by public criminals, while diverting valuable law enforcement resources away from addressing real threats to public safety. In addition, national identifiers are incompatible with a limited, constitutional government. I, therefore, hope my colleagues will join my efforts to protect the freedom of their constituents by supporting the Identity Theft Prevention Act.

THE ANGELES AND SAN  
BERNARDINO NATIONAL FOR-  
ESTS PROTECTION ACT

**HON. DAVID DREIER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 5, 2011*

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I have the honor of representing the Foothill communities at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains. Included in my district are the Angeles and the San Bernardino National Forests. These National Forests are two of the most widely visited forests in the Nation. In addition, they provide over 30 percent of the drinking water for Los Angeles County alone. Unfortunately, this area is also prone to devastating wildfires. Ensuring the public safety of our first responders and residents remains a top priority of mine. That is why I have been working for over a year with multiple parties on a proposal to assist our firefighters and preserve recreational activities in the region.

It is also vital that we continue to care for our natural resources. The Angeles and San Bernardino National Forests Protection Act,

which I am introducing today, adds approximately 17,700 acres of forest lands to the Cucamonga and Sheep Mountain Wilderness Areas. With their close proximity to dozens of communities, the Angeles and San Bernardino National Forests provide residents with an opportunity to easily enjoy the public lands in their own backyard. It is my hope that this legislation will protect this area for the benefit of future generations.

Throughout this entire process, my number one focus has been to protect our firefighters and other first responders who are responsible for keeping lives, homes and communities safe from approaching fires. I have worked closely with the Los Angeles and the San Bernardino County fire departments and have incorporated their suggestions on how we can make their job easier and safer. I am pleased that this legislation has the support of both the Los Angeles County and the San Bernardino County fire departments as well as the support of local fire chiefs. I will continue to work with our fire departments to ensure they have the resources needed to do their job as safely and effectively as possible.

This legislation also calls on the Forest Service to reduce the severe maintenance backlog that exists in both the Angeles and San Bernardino National Forests and to restore valuable recreational opportunities that were lost in the devastating 2009 Station Fire. Numerous facilities and trail markers were damaged during this fire and my legislation calls on the Forest Service to restore the facilities impacted in the Station Fire. This will allow individuals and families to enjoy our public lands for many years to come.

I also want to take this opportunity to note that this legislation will not impact any existing private property or water rights in this area. Multiple recreational uses, including horseback riding as well as hiking currently occur in these National Forests and these activities must be allowed to continue.

As this legislation works its way through the legislative process, I will keep working with all of the interested parties to ensure that our first responders can safely and securely protect our communities from forest fires while also preserving recreational opportunities for everyone.

HONORING INLAND HOSPITAL

**HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD**

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 5, 2011*

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of Inland Hospital in Waterville, Maine.

Inland Hospital is a 48-bed, not-for-profit, community hospital that was founded in 1943 by a group of osteopathic physicians with a vision of providing compassionate care that focused on the whole patient, not just the disease. Today, that patient-centered approach is alive and well at Inland, where staff provide the kind of care we all want for our own families. Patients are treated with respect and dignity and benefit from an open communication process that delivers an extraordinary experience and the best possible medical outcome.

Inland Hospital has been recently recognized as one of the nation's top rural hospitals