

should play in our economy, foreign policy, and our daily lives.

Many Americans believe that if the United States had learned from the past, they would have realized that the greater the country got involved in the economy, with countries around the world, and in our daily lives, the greater the magnitude of the problems in the status quo would become. Many Americans believe that our government has not learned from the past and continues to make the same mistakes that once made its population distraught. Even though our country's interaction with foreign policy and the economy may not directly impact us, the interaction somehow influences a majority of America's population in their daily lives. This impact on the status quo and on the population's mindset is indicative through stories in the news, through personal experiences, and through observations of our surroundings.

Overall, our government should understand that the role that they play in our lives should be in balance. Foreign policy has made our country one of the most powerful countries around the world. We have a prestigious navy, a strong air force, and, most importantly, the most dominating army that money can buy; however, in this case, America's dedication towards the development of its army has preoccupied them to a point where it has reallocated funds from other areas that desperately need them. This reallocation would allow the government to play a more conservative role in our lives. If the funds that were dedicated towards foreign policy were reevaluated, I'm sure there are places where cuts can be made and the money saved be reallocated to other sectors. This begs the question of which sector requires the money the most, based on its influence on our daily lives. The education sector consists of the building blocks of this country and preoccupies most teenagers' daily lives. If more money was invested in this sector, we would be able to hire more experienced teachers, give teachers more freedom to construct their courses, create more effective ways of assessment, as well as pay our teachers more. What this would inevitably lead to is lesser involvement in education, for kids my age, most of our daily lives, and more freedom for teachers to foster growth and meet the needs of individual students, as well as give students the freedom to express themselves without being restricted to the methods of the government. This is important in demonstrating the balance that is necessary of government in our daily lives. If the government allowed students to embrace education, the United States would be able to be competitive with the education systems of other countries around the world. With smarter future generations, America would not make the same mistakes it made in the past that led to economic collapses such as the one that occurred during the Great Depression. Individuals in the American government would finally realize that they ought to play a smaller role in the economy by allowing it to be the one that causes its own downfall and also its own rebuilding. Over the past few years, it has become evident that the greater the role that government plays in the economy, the further it goes into shambles and the more jobs that are lost. This is important because even though I have been fortunate enough to have a family that has not had to go through the stresses of job loss, the effects of thousands of jobs going away are being felt by families all across the United States, affecting their daily lives, in how they live and how they interact with the people around them. If the government did not play as large a role as it is playing right now, we would probably see the economy col-

lapse and then gradually begin to rebuild itself, creating more jobs, steadying the economy, and more importantly, bringing stability to families across the country.

Thus, the role that government ought to play in our lives should be one in balance and it ought to be the government's responsibility to make sure their actions are properly affecting their population. However, in situations where the government loses sight of the problems that lay ahead due to their actions, it becomes the peoples' responsibility to speak and make sure their voice is heard. Because, after all, as Abraham Lincoln once said, this is a "government of the people, by the people, for the people."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2012

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 114, had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

IN RECOGNITION OF THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE PATIENT PROTECTION AND AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2012

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the second anniversary of the enactment of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. In the two years since its enactment, the Affordable Care Act has been good for seniors, good for women, good for small businesses, and good for all Americans.

As the Affordable Care Act is implemented, it will continue to expand access to affordable, quality health care for over 30 million Americans and will work to reign in the ever-escalating costs of health care. Passage of the Affordable Care Act was a major step toward fulfilling the promise all Americans were pledged: the promise of unalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness which quality healthcare embodies.

For the people I represent in the 37th District of California, the Affordable Care Act will improve coverage for 299,000 residents who already have insurance. It will give tax credits and other assistance to up to 146,000 families and 15,100 small businesses to help them afford coverage. Health care reform will also improve Medicare for 63,000 beneficiaries in my district, including closing the prescription drug "donut hole" once and for all.

In 2010, the Affordable Care Act made it possible for 354,592 Medicare beneficiaries in California to receive a \$250 rebate to help cover the cost of their prescription drugs when they hit the donut hole. In 2011, 319,429 Medicare beneficiaries received a 50 percent discount—an average savings of \$538 per person—on brand-name prescription drugs when they hit the coverage gap. That's a total savings of over \$171 million for seniors in California alone! In my district, 3,200 seniors received prescription drug discounts worth \$1.5 million, an average discount of \$460 per senior.

The Affordable Care Act extends coverage to 92,500 uninsured residents of the 37th District and will guarantee that 17,500 residents with pre-existing conditions can obtain the health insurance they need. Since enactment, health care reform has extended insurance coverage to 5,599 Californians through the new Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan.

The Affordable Care Act protects 1,100 families from bankruptcy due to unaffordable health care costs and currently allows 59,000 young adults to obtain coverage on their parents' insurance plans. The new law provides millions of dollars in new funding for 11 community health centers in my district. And finally, it will reduce the cost of uncompensated care for hospitals and other health care providers by \$125 million annually.

Mr. Speaker, as we approach the two year anniversary of the enactment of the Affordable Care Act, an attack on women's access to affordable, quality, and necessary healthcare services is underway. From the comments made by Rush Limbaugh about Georgetown Law Student Sandra Fluke, to Republican attempts to roll back coverage and restrict access to birth control, the GOP's war on women stands in stark contrast to the Administration's goal of ensuring that women have access to the healthcare services they need to remain healthy.

As a female Member of Congress, I understand that women have unique health care needs, and are often the ones who make health care decisions for their families. I voted for and strongly support the Affordable Care Act because it provides important benefits for women and their families. The Affordable Care Act helps women by eliminating the discriminatory gender rating system, making sure that insurance companies do not consider pregnancy grounds for denying coverage, and doing away with all pre-existing conditions.

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, all Americans joining new insurance plans have the freedom to choose from any primary care provider, OB-GYN, or pediatrician in their health plan's network, or emergency care outside of the plan's network, without a referral. Under the Affordable Care Act, women joining a new health care plan can receive recommended preventive services, like mammograms, new baby care and well-child visits, and an annual wellness visit with no out-of-pocket costs. In 2011, over 6 million people with private insurance coverage in California gained preventative service coverage with no cost sharing as a result of the Affordable Care Act.

Before enactment of the Affordable Care Act, women could be charged more for individual insurance policies simply because of their gender. A 22-year-old woman could be charged 150 percent the premium that a 22-year-old man paid. In 2014, insurers will not be able to charge women higher premiums than they charge men. The law takes strong action to control health care costs, including helping states crack down on excessive premium increases and making sure most of your premium dollars go toward your health care.

The Affordable Care Act also allows young adults under the age of 26 to stay on their parents' health insurance plan. This provision has expanded access to health insurance coverage for 2.5 million young people nationwide. In my district, 7,000 young adults have taken advantage of this provision and are now covered under their parents' plan.

This week, the House will consider a bill to repeal the Independent Payment Advisory Board established under the Affordable Care Act. Having previously garnered bipartisan support, the majority's decision to attach a medical liability provision to the underlying piece of legislation amounts to nothing short of a partisan ploy to score points with their base.

The language attached to the bill would place caps on medical malpractice awards for pain and suffering at \$250,000 and would override most state tort laws. Unfortunately, the majority's decision to include tort reform language on a completely unrelated measure demonstrates their refusal to work with Members across the aisle in order to further strengthen the Affordable Care Act.

Mr. Speaker, the Affordable Care Act provides American families with stability and peace of mind. Never again will they have to choose between their health and their livelihood. As a result of the Affordable Care Act, 23,000 children and 90,000 adults in my district now have health insurance that covers preventive services without paying any co-pays, coinsurance, or deductibles.

I am proud to be a part of this historic health care policy change, and to be part of the days ahead in which we will work to further strengthen it.

CONGRATULATING ELIZABETH
TRAN, RECIPIENT OF THE 2012
PRUDENTIAL SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY
AWARD

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2012

Mr. WEBSTER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize Elizabeth Tran for exemplary volunteer service. Elizabeth, age 17, of Orlando, has been named one of the top honorees in Florida by the 2012 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program, an annual honor conferred on the most impressive student volunteers in each State and the District of Columbia.

Elizabeth is a junior at Cypress Creek High School and has raised more than \$20,000 to support the Children's Miracle Network in the first two years of the "Miss Miracle" charity pageant, an annual event that she created. The "Miss Miracle" pageant is conducted in cooperation with Teens Go Green, an organization co-founded by Elizabeth and dedicated to raising public awareness for protecting the environment. All "Miss Miracle" contestants raise money to support the organization, and those contestants who raise the most are crowned "Miss Miracle."

The Prudential Spirit of Community Award was created in 1995 by Prudential Financial in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals to encourage youth volunteers in their contributions to society, to emphasize the value of volunteerism, and to inspire other young people to follow their example. Over the past 17 years, the program has become the Nation's largest youth recognition effort based solely on community service, and has involved more than 100,000 young volunteers at the local, State, and national level.

It is my pleasure to commend Elizabeth for her energy and initiative in seeking to make

her community and world a better place to live by supporting organizations such as the Children's Miracle Network. Her commitment and accomplishment is extraordinary in today's world and deserves recognition. Her actions remind us that young Americans can play an important role in our communities.

On behalf of the citizens of central Florida, I am pleased to recognize Elizabeth Tran's selflessness and enthusiasm for serving others and for making a difference. The kind of altruism evident in Elizabeth's efforts represents our brightest hopes for a better tomorrow. May her efforts inspire others to follow in her footsteps.

A TRIBUTE TO MONICA PEARSON

HON. DAVID SCOTT

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2012

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, Monica Pearson is a familiar face to metro Atlanta's residents, though most know her by her former name—Monica Kaufman. For the past 37 years, Monica has anchored WSB-TV's Channel 2 Action News. The character and amount of trust she has built as Channel 2's nightly newscaster is laudable, but perhaps more important are the barriers she broke as she developed that reputation. Born and brought up in the Civil Rights era, Monica became not only the first African-American, but also the first woman to anchor a daily evening newscast on WSB in 1975.

Throughout her long career, Monica has accumulated an even longer list of awards and achievements. All in all, she has won thirty Local and Southern Regional Emmy awards. When she saw injustice or a story that needed to be heard, she was there reporting on it—first at the 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. segments, and later at 4 p.m. Her hard-hitting investigative journalism cuts at all different issues. In 1992 she spoke out on behalf of women and girls in Georgia when she found out that the Georgia High School Association's all-male executive committee did not have a state-wide competition for girls' soccer or cheerleading. She was awarded the Women's Sports Journalism Award for Local Television Reporting from the Women's Sports Foundation and Miller Lite for her report.

Monica has been honored for bringing attention to a wide range of issues—from the "HOT FLASH! The Truth about Menopause" documentary that won local and national awards in 1994 to the "Prejudice and Hate: Georgians and the Holocaust" documentary that led her to win the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust's Humanitarian Award in 1977. Her sense of civic duty, compassion and curiosity has distinguished her from her peers, winning an Emmy Award for Best Feature Program—"Monica Kaufman Closeups," the National Foundation for Women Legislators' "Media Excellence Award" and the Georgia Commission of Women's "2004 Georgia Woman of the Year."

While devoting her life to journalism, she has also deeply involved herself in the community. She remains a passionate supporter of the Metropolitan United Way, the organization that helped her move beyond her poor background to become an award-winning news-

caster. Since then, she has served as Chair of Atlanta's United Way board, the first African-American and only the second woman. Her dedication to the organization might be due in no small part to the fact that her daughter was adopted through a United Way agency. In her own words, "United Way literally unites people."

United Way is not the only organization that has touched Monica's heart. For many years, Monica ran in the Susan G. Komen's Race for the Cure. She continued to run in the race and volunteer for the organization until the year she herself was diagnosed with breast cancer. Her reaction to this cancer is a story that truly touched my heart. A very religious woman, Monica did not let fear cripple her—instead she left everything to God. She prayed, "Thy will be done, O Lord, not mine." "If you are really strong in your faith, then you don't worry about the outcome," she said. The outcome is obvious—Monica remains to this day a strong, dedicated woman. She is both an inspiration and a role model. Monica will be retiring in July, but I know her character, personality and spirit will not let her keep still. I wish her the very best in her future endeavors, and may we continue to hear of her excellent work for her community. God Bless.

CONGRATULATORY REMARKS FOR
OBTAINING THE RANK OF EAGLE
SCOUT

HON. SANDY ADAMS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2012

Mrs. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Joshua Beard for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

Throughout the history of the Boy Scouts of America, the rank of Eagle Scout has only been attained through dedication to concepts such as honor, duty, country and charity. By applying these concepts to daily life, Joshua has proven his true and complete understanding of their meanings, and thereby deserves this honor.

I offer my congratulations on a job well done and best wishes for the future.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF
SENATOR BARBARA MIKULSKI

HON. CHAKA FATTAH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2012

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an accomplished and distinguished member of the United States Senate who is achieving a milestone worthy of recognition in this body.

Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI is the longest-serving woman in congressional history. Before being sworn into the Senate in 1986, Senator MIKULSKI served in this chamber for five terms. She has now served the people of Maryland for more than 35 years.

Senator MIKULSKI is the daughter of Polish American small-business owners, who taught her the meaning of hard work. She attended Mount Saint Agnes College and the University