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FLOOR REMARKS IN SUPPORT OF COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the first designation of March as Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. I introduced a resolution commemorating the anniversary as well as supporting the importance of observing Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Colorectal cancer is preventable when it is detected early. Yet, less than half of those who should be screened get colonoscopies. I introduced H.Con.Res. 60 to help raise awareness of the importance of early detection and screening. The bill passed the House of Representatives today by voice vote, and you may listen to my floor remarks [clicking here](#).

HEALTH REFORM OP ED

House and Senate Committees are holding hearings on health reform, and legislation is being drafted. Over the Easter recess (April 6-17), the House Energy and Commerce Committee will be working to draft health reform legislation. A bill may be brought to the floor in the Senate by the end of June. Last week, an op-ed I wrote regarding important health reform principles ran in the Washington Times. You may read the full text of the article [clicking here](#).

COVER THE UNINSURED WEEK

This month marks the seventh annual "National Cover the Uninsured Week" – a campaign to highlight the need for a comprehensive plan to cover the nearly 46 million Americans who lack health insurance.

A growing number of families cannot afford health insurance coverage and the cost of health care to businesses escalates yearly. According to a report released this week by Families USA, approximately 9.3 million Texas were uninsured at some point during 2007-2008. More than four out of five Texans who lack health insurance are in working families.

These are startling figures that highlight the importance of acting swiftly to reduce the number of individuals without health insurance, and improve our nation's health care system.

People without health insurance are less likely to use preventive services, more likely to delay acquiring health care, and are twice as likely to visit a hospital emergency room compared to those with health insurance.

I have introduced the *Affordable Health Care Expansion Act* (H.R.879), which would allow families to use tax credits to purchase health care insurance. Fifty-two percent of those without health insurance say they don't have it because they can't afford it. My bill provides individuals with an up-front tax credit toward the purchase of health insurance. Experts agree that this proposal will reduce the number of uninsured by more than 50 percent.

HELPING HANDS FOR AUTISM ACT (H.R. 1707)

Since autism was first described just 60 years ago, the prevalence of autism has dramatically increased. Autism spectrum disorders will be diagnosed in more than 25,000 U.S. children this year – more than new pediatric cases of AIDS, diabetes, and cancer combined.

Too often families feel overwhelmed after diagnosis and lost as to where to turn for help. That is why I have introduced the *Helping HANDS for Autism Act* which creates a grant program to provide "autism navigator" services to help families navigate the web of services and care. Navigators will help guide families to current health, education, housing and social services that are

often available. The program will help connect families to important treatment options soon after diagnosis.

The bill is supported by Autism Speaks and the Autism Society of America. Reps. Dan Burton (IN); Ander Crenshaw (FL); Peter King (NY); Frank Wolf (VA); and Bill Young (FL) are all original cosponsors. Senator Robert Menendez (NJ) introduced the Senate version of the bill.

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