

health care and education and infrastructure and bringing down our level of deficit spending.

This resolution tonight underscores that America will no longer close our eyes, that this Congress is no longer closing its eyes to the repression of women and children in Afghanistan, the killing and the maiming of children in Afghanistan, the ongoing chaos.

No. 1, that is the moral position to take, and that is what this resolution says; but, No. 2, let us remember the practical end of it. And I found a funny thing in my years in public service: When we do something, when we ignore the moral course of action, we also are going down a road of something that is not practical. There is a relationship between a practical policy and a moral policy. If we walk away from these people and let them fend for themselves with this brutality and tyranny, with maiming of their children and the repression of their women, what will happen? The chaos will continue in Afghanistan, and I can assure all of my friends here today, all of my friends here today, that Central Asia, which should become an intricate part of the economic system of the world will eventually be engulfed in that same chaos.

Pakistan, who has been a pillar, a pillar of stability in South Asia, our friend will go under, because if we permit the fanaticism of the Taliban to go on, it will bring down Pakistan just as billions of dollars of drug money going into the hands of narcoterrorists in Afghanistan, in a chaotic Afghanistan, will eventually wreak havoc in the United States. It has already caused the lives of American servicemen and people to be lost. A terrorist trained in Afghanistan helped blow up a building which housed our military people in Saudi Arabia. There was an assassination attempt on the Pope. They found out that the terrorist who was going to assassinate the Pope was trained in Afghanistan.

We cannot let this go on, because not only is it immoral to let this go on, but practically speaking, if we do it, it will come back and hurt us.

There are many ways that we can try to reach peace. Having been involved in this process, I believe King Zahir Shah, the king in exile, who is a moderate leader of his people, a moderate Muslim leader, a devout Muslim, but not a fanatic, will bring back sanity to his country. Zahir Shah has pledged to his people to restore civil government, rebuild the infrastructure and create the basis for democratic elections. And in democratic elections I believe the courage and the honor of the Afghan people will come out over the fanaticism of the Taliban. I have no doubt about that.

And I would like to close with a short story. Many people in this body do not know right after I was elected what I did. Many of my friends and colleagues after they got elected the very first

time took off and went golfing or went swimming or went hiking and just got away from it all because the first election is usually the hardest election for this body. I made a pledge to my friends in Afghanistan, because I worked with them when I worked in the White House, that when I left, when I left the White House, if I had a chance and if the battle in Afghanistan was still going on, that I would join them in their struggle.

So I had 2 months between the time that I was elected and the time that I would be sworn in as a Congressman, and I knew that that was the only time that I would be free again like that for the rest of my life, or at least the rest of my time when I would be elected in Congress. So I disappeared, and I ended up with a mujahedin unit in Afghanistan fighting in the battle of Jalalabad, which was then under siege. And as I hiked toward this battle, which was one of the most strenuous hikes, I might add, that I have ever made in my entire life, and it was just beyond any endurance that I could ever do today, but a young Afghan boy, it was a full moon, and the artillery shells were exploding in the distance and lighting up the skies, and it was about 15 mujahedin with me armed with AK-47s and RPGs, just lightly armed, and a young boy who was probably 17 years old ran up besides me, AK-47 slung over his shoulder, and said, "You come from America."

And I said, "Yes."

He said, "You are in politics in America."

And I said, "Yes, I am."

He said, "Are you a donkey or an elephant?"

Here is a young man, 17 years old, fighting for his country, fighting for our country, fighting for the people of the West, fighting for his religion, a brave and courageous young man, and I said "What do you want to do when this is all over?"

□ 2115

He says "I want to build things. I would like to be an architect."

I do not know if that young man survived the battle. I do not know if he did or not. But I know if he is given his chance, he will rebuild his country. I know he is a brave and courageous young person who believed so much in the United States that he knew the symbols of our political structure. He wanted democracy for his own country, but when the Soviets were defeated, we walked away.

Let us reestablish this commitment to the Afghan people, at the very least, to reach out and provide some leadership, to help them attain their own democracy, and, if they obtain democracy, perhaps through some support and guidance from their former king, it will be just as their struggle against communism, a benefit to us as well.

So tonight that is what this resolution is all about. I would ask my colleagues to join me in taking this moral

stand and repaying this sacred debt to the people of Afghanistan.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAZIO of New York). All time has expired.

The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California [Mr. ROHRBACHER] that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 156, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended, and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SAVINGS ARE VITAL TO EVERYONE'S RETIREMENT ACT OF 1997

Mr. FAWELL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 1377) to amend title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to encourage retirement income savings.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendment:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Savings Are Vital to Everyone's Retirement Act of 1997".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—*The Congress finds as follows:*

(1) *The impending retirement of the baby boom generation will severely strain our already overburdened entitlement system, necessitating increased reliance on pension and other personal savings.*

(2) *Studies have found that less than a third of Americans have even tried to calculate how much they will need to have saved by retirement, and that less than 20 percent are very confident they will have enough money to live comfortably throughout their retirement.*

(3) *A leading obstacle to expanding retirement savings is the simple fact that far too many Americans—particularly the young—are either unaware of, or without the knowledge and resources necessary to take advantage of, the extensive benefits offered by our retirement savings system.*

(b) PURPOSE.—*It is the purpose of this Act—*

(1) *to advance the public's knowledge and understanding of retirement savings and its critical importance to the future well-being of American workers and their families;*

(2) *to provide for a periodic, bipartisan national retirement savings summit in conjunction with the White House to elevate the issue of savings to national prominence; and*

(3) *to initiate the development of a broad-based, public education program to encourage and enhance individual commitment to a personal retirement savings strategy.*

SEC. 3. OUTREACH BY THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR.

(a) IN GENERAL.—*Part 5 of subtitle B of title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (29 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:*

"OUTREACH TO PROMOTE RETIREMENT INCOME SAVINGS

"SEC. 516. (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall maintain an ongoing program of outreach to the public designed to effectively promote retirement income savings by the public.

"(b) METHODS.—The Secretary shall carry out the requirements of subsection (a) by means

which shall ensure effective communication to the public, including publication of public service announcements, public meetings, creation of educational materials, and establishment of a site on the Internet.

“(c) INFORMATION TO BE MADE AVAILABLE.—The information to be made available by the Secretary as part of the program of outreach required under subsection (a) shall include the following:

“(1) a description of the vehicles currently available to individuals and employers for creating and maintaining retirement income savings, specifically including information explaining to employers, in simple terms, the characteristics and operation of the different retirement savings vehicles, including the steps to establish each such vehicle, and

“(2) information regarding matters relevant to establishing retirement income savings, such as—

“(A) the forms of retirement income savings,

“(B) the concept of compound interest,

“(C) the importance of commencing savings early in life,

“(D) savings principles,

“(E) the importance of prudence and diversification in investing,

“(F) the importance of the timing of investments, and

“(G) the impact on retirement savings of life's uncertainties, such as living beyond one's life expectancy.

“(d) ESTABLISHMENT OF SITE ON THE INTERNET.—The Secretary shall establish a permanent site on the Internet concerning retirement income savings. The site shall contain at least the following information:

“(1) a means for individuals to calculate their estimated retirement savings needs, based on their retirement income goal as a percentage of their preretirement income;

“(2) a description in simple terms of the common types of retirement income savings arrangements available to both individuals and employers (specifically including small employers), including information on the amount of money that can be placed into a given vehicle, the tax treatment of the money, the amount of accumulation possible through different typical investment options and interest rate projections, and a directory of resources of more descriptive information;

“(3) materials explaining to employers in simple terms, the characteristics and operation of the different retirement savings arrangements for their workers and what the basic legal requirements are under this Act and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, including the steps to establish each such arrangement;

“(4) copies of all educational materials developed by the Department of Labor, and by other Federal agencies in consultation with such Department, to promote retirement income savings by workers and employers; and

“(5) links to other sites maintained on the Internet by governmental agencies and non-profit organizations that provide additional detail on retirement income savings arrangements and related topics on savings or investing.

“(e) COORDINATION.—The Secretary shall coordinate the outreach program under this section with similar efforts undertaken by other public and private entities.”

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1 of such Act is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 514 the following new items:

“Sec. 515. Delinquent contributions.

“Sec. 516. Outreach to promote retirement income savings.”

SEC. 4. NATIONAL SUMMIT ON RETIREMENT SAVINGS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Part 5 of subtitle B of title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, as amended by section 3 of this Act, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“NATIONAL SUMMIT ON RETIREMENT SAVINGS

“Sec. 517. (a) AUTHORITY TO CALL SUMMIT.—Not later than July 15, 1998, the President shall convene a National Summit on Retirement Income Savings at the White House, to be co-hosted by the President and the Speaker and the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives and the Majority Leader and Minority Leader of the Senate. Such a National Summit shall be convened thereafter in 2001 and 2005 on or after September 1 of each year involved. Such a National Summit shall—

“(1) advance the public's knowledge and understanding of retirement savings and its critical importance to the future well-being of American workers and their families;

“(2) facilitate the development of a broad-based, public education program to encourage and enhance individual commitment to a personal retirement savings strategy;

“(3) develop recommendations for additional research, reforms, and actions in the field of private pensions and individual retirement savings; and

“(4) disseminate the report of, and information obtained by, the National Summit and exhibit materials and works of the National Summit.

“(b) PLANNING AND DIRECTION.—The National Summit shall be planned and conducted under the direction of the Secretary, in consultation with, and with the assistance of, the heads of such other Federal departments and agencies as the President may designate. Such assistance may include the assignment of personnel. The Secretary shall, in planning and conducting the National Summit, consult with the congressional leaders specified in subsection (e)(2). The Secretary shall also, in carrying out the Secretary's duties under this subsection, consult and coordinate with at least one organization made up of private sector businesses and associations partnered with Government entities to promote long-term financial security in retirement through savings.

“(c) PURPOSE OF NATIONAL SUMMIT.—The purpose of the National Summit shall be—

“(1) to increase the public awareness of the value of personal savings for retirement;

“(2) to advance the public's knowledge and understanding of retirement savings and its critical importance to the future well-being of American workers and their families;

“(3) to facilitate the development of a broad-based, public education program to encourage and enhance individual commitment to a personal retirement savings strategy;

“(4) to identify the problems workers have in setting aside adequate savings for retirement;

“(5) to identify the barriers which employers, especially small employers, face in assisting their workers in accumulating retirement savings;

“(6) to examine the impact and effectiveness of individual employers to promote personal savings for retirement among their workers and to promote participation in company savings options;

“(7) to examine the impact and effectiveness of government programs at the Federal, State, and local levels to educate the public about, and to encourage, retirement income savings;

“(8) to develop such specific and comprehensive recommendations for the legislative and executive branches of the Government and for private sector action as may be appropriate for promoting private pensions and individual retirement savings; and

“(9) to develop recommendations for the coordination of Federal, State, and local retirement income savings initiatives among the Federal, State, and local levels of government and for the coordination of such initiatives.

“(d) SCOPE OF NATIONAL SUMMIT.—The scope of the National Summit shall consist of issues relating to individual and employer-based retirement savings and shall not include issues relating to the old-age, survivors, and disability in-

urance program under title II of the Social Security Act.

“(e) NATIONAL SUMMIT PARTICIPANTS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—To carry out the purposes of the National Summit, the National Summit shall bring together—

“(A) professionals and other individuals working in the fields of employee benefits and retirement savings;

“(B) Members of Congress and officials in the executive branch;

“(C) representatives of State and local governments;

“(D) representatives of private sector institutions, including individual employers, concerned about promoting the issue of retirement savings and facilitating savings among American workers; and

“(E) representatives of the general public.

“(2) STATUTORILY REQUIRED PARTICIPATION.—The participants in the National Summit shall include the following individuals or their designees:

“(A) the Speaker and the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives;

“(B) the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader of the Senate;

“(C) the Chairman and ranking Member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives;

“(D) the Chairman and ranking Member of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources of the Senate;

“(E) the Chairman and ranking Member of the Special Committee on Aging of the Senate;

“(F) the Chairman and ranking Member of the Subcommittees on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education of the Senate and House of Representatives; and

“(G) the parties referred to in subsection (b).

“(3) ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—There shall be not more than 200 additional participants. Of such additional participants—

“(i) one-half shall be appointed by the President, in consultation with the elected leaders of the President's party in Congress (either the Speaker of the House of Representatives or the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, and either the Majority Leader or the Minority Leader of the Senate; and

“(ii) one-half shall be appointed by the elected leaders of Congress of the party to which the President does not belong (one-half of that allotment to be appointed by either the Speaker of the House of Representatives or the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, and one-half of that allotment to be appointed by either the Majority Leader or the Minority Leader of the Senate).

“(B) APPOINTMENT REQUIREMENTS.—The additional participants described in subparagraph (A) shall be—

“(i) appointed not later than January 31, 1998;

“(ii) selected without regard to political affiliation or past partisan activity; and

“(iii) representative of the diversity of thought in the fields of employee benefits and retirement income savings.

“(4) PRESIDING OFFICERS.—The National Summit shall be presided over equally by representatives of the executive and legislative branches.

“(f) NATIONAL SUMMIT ADMINISTRATION.—

“(1) ADMINISTRATION.—In administering this section, the Secretary shall—

“(A) request the cooperation and assistance of such other Federal departments and agencies and other parties referred to in subsection (b) as may be appropriate in the carrying out of this section;

“(B) furnish all reasonable assistance to State agencies, area agencies, and other appropriate organizations to enable them to organize and conduct conferences in conjunction with the National Summit;

“(C) make available for public comment a proposed agenda for the National Summit that reflects to the greatest extent possible the purposes for the National Summit set out in this section;

“(D) prepare and make available background materials for the use of participants in the National Summit that the Secretary considers necessary; and

“(E) appoint and fix the pay of such additional personnel as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this section without regard to provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service, and without regard to chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of such title relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

“(2) DUTIES.—The Secretary shall, in carrying out the responsibilities and functions of the Secretary under this section, and as part of the National Summit, ensure that—

“(A) the National Summit shall be conducted in a manner that ensures broad participation of Federal, State, and local agencies and private organizations, professionals, and others involved in retirement income savings and provides a strong basis for assistance to be provided under paragraph (1)(B);

“(B) the agenda prepared under paragraph (1)(C) for the National Summit is published in the Federal Register; and

“(C) the personnel appointed under paragraph (1)(E) shall be fairly balanced in terms of points of views represented and shall be appointed without regard to political affiliation or previous partisan activities.

“(3) NONAPPLICATION OF FACA.—The provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the National Summit.

“(g) REPORT.—The Secretary shall prepare a report describing the activities of the National Summit and shall submit the report to the President, the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, the Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate, and the chief executive officers of the States not later than 90 days after the date on which the National Summit is adjourned.

“(h) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this section, the term ‘State’ means a State, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and any other territory or possession of the United States.

“(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated for fiscal years beginning on or after October 1, 1997, such sums as are necessary to carry out this section.

“(2) AUTHORIZATION TO ACCEPT PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS.—In order to facilitate the National Summit as a public-private partnership, the Secretary may accept private contributions, in the form of money, supplies, or services, to defray the costs of the National Summit.

“(j) FINANCIAL OBLIGATION FOR FISCAL YEAR 1998.—The financial obligation for the Department of Labor for fiscal year 1998 shall not exceed the lesser of—

“(1) one-half of the costs of the National Summit; or

“(2) \$250,000.

The private sector organization described in subsection (b) and contracted with by the Secretary shall be obligated for the balance of the cost of the National Summit.

“(k) CONTRACTS.—The Secretary may enter into contracts to carry out the Secretary’s responsibilities under this section. The Secretary shall enter into a contract on a sole-source basis to ensure the timely completion of the National Summit in fiscal year 1998.”

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1 of such Act, as amended by section 3 of this Act, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 516 the following new item:

“Sec. 517. National Summit on Retirement Savings.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Il-

linois [Mr. FAWELL] and the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PAYNE] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. FAWELL].

Mr. FAWELL. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to join with my colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PAYNE], the ranking Democrat on the Subcommittee on Employer-Employee Relations, as well as many other Democrats and Republicans across the political spectrum, in sponsoring the SAVER Act. H.R. 1377 represents bipartisan legislation addressing a critical national problem, the lack of individual retirement savings.

I do want to make special mention of the fact that the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PAYNE] has been very cooperative. We have worked together in good bipartisan fashion, and I do very much appreciate the gentleman from New Jersey and the fine work that he has put in on this legislation. Without the gentleman, there simply would not be any such legislation.

The SAVER Act was initially passed by the House back in May. On November 7, the Senate passed SAVER with minor modifications made to secure the support of the Department of Labor. I would like to thank Senate sponsor Senator CHARLES GRASSLEY, the chairman of the Committee on Aging, for his efforts in guiding this legislation through the other chamber.

The SAVER Act is truly a bipartisan initiative, supported not only by the Department of Labor, but also by a diverse group of organizations, from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to the American Association of Retired Persons.

Mr. Speaker, America faces a ticking demographic time bomb that requires increased retirement savings. The Savings are Vital to Everyone’s Retirement Act, or the SAVER Act, is the first step in defusing the retirement time bomb. The SAVER Act initiates projects to educate American workers about retirement savings and convenes a national summit on retirement savings at the White House.

Through this bill, we facilitate a public-private partnership to educate the public on this serious and underreported national problem. Workers need to know the importance of saving for the future and of saving as early in life as possible.

As a survey released this year by the Employee Benefit Research Institute, known as EBRI, reveals, there is a lot of work to be done. Less than one-third of Americans have even tried to calculate how much they need to have saved by retirement. Furthermore, less than 20 percent are very confident they will be able to have enough money to live comfortably throughout their retirement. The lack of adequate retirement savings will only become a more pressing problem as the baby-boomers begin to retire.

Far too few Americans, particularly the young, have either the knowledge

or the resources necessary to take advantage of the extensive benefits offered by our retirement savings system. We know the old adage that you feed someone for life by teaching them to fish. We need to apply this principle to retirement savings.

The same EBRI survey found while only a quarter of workers express confidence in their ability to map out a savings strategy, an encouraging 50 percent said they would stick to a plan, if they only had one.

We have to find ways to get the information and the skills out to the workers of America to harness this latent energy. The SAVER Act directs the Department of Labor to maintain an ongoing program of education and outreach to the public through public service announcements, public meetings, creation of educational materials, and establishment of a site on the Internet.

The information to be made available will include a means for individuals to calculate their estimated retirement savings needs, a plain English description of the common types of retirement savings arrangements currently available to both individuals and employers, and an explanation for employers, hopefully in simple terms, of how to establish different retirement savings arrangements for their workers.

The SAVER Act also convenes a national summit on retirement savings at the White House, cohosted by the executive and the legislative branches, to be held by July 15, 1998, and again in the year 2001, and again in the year 2005. The national summit would advance the public’s knowledge and understanding of retirement savings and facilitate the development of a broad-based public education program, identify the barriers which hinder workers from setting aside adequate savings for retirement and impede employers, especially small employers, from assisting workers in accumulating retirement savings, and develop specific recommendations for legislative, executive, and private sector actions to promote retirement savings among American workers.

Mr. Speaker, the national summit would bring together experts in the field of employee benefits and retirement savings, key leaders of government, and interested parties from the private sector and the general public. The delegates would be selected by the congressional leadership and the President and would represent the diversity of thought in the field without regard to their political affiliation.

The national summit would be a public-private partnership receiving substantial funding from private sector contributions. I hope that the SAVER Act can be a first step in a truly bipartisan effort to reverse the long course of neglect of this vital issue and help American workers better prepare for a comfortable and a secure retirement.

I urge my colleagues to vote for passage of the SAVER Act and vote to help defuse the retirement time bomb.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to speak to the importance of the SAVER Act. I think it will provide a big first step towards greater awareness about retirement security for all Americans.

I wish to commend Chairman FAWELL for his effort to bring to the attention of all of us this very important issue that affects millions of Americans. This legislation has been skillfully moved through our subcommittee and the full committee, and I appreciate the chairman for his fine work on this very important piece of legislation.

I would also like to commend Senator JOHN BREAUX from Louisiana who also worked on the other side of the House.

The retirement clock is running out, as has been mentioned by the chairman, for millions of Americans and their families. After a lifetime of hard work and contributing to and building our society, millions of older Americans have retired and are not prepared for it. We have always heard that the future belongs to those who are prepared for it. Many of our older Americans are not and will not be. They cannot afford to pay their bills.

While we have worked closely with the administration to make gains in strengthening protection for plan participants in the last 4 years, we still have miles to go in ensuring retirement security for the American workforce.

Half of all older Americans have incomes of less than \$11,300. This is because their incomes are primarily drawn from Social Security, which on average pays \$8,460 to retired workers. That is less than today's minimum wage. Very little of their income comes from individual savings. A very alarming picture painted by the statistics is that many of the people we need to reach out to are women and minorities. As you know, there is a direct correlation between pension adequacy and the wages that workers receive. This is because many employers base their pension benefits on the worker's wages.

This is true with respect to defined contributions and defined benefit plans, including 401(k) plans. A very disturbing image forms when we begin to think about the retirement security of low-wage workers, particularly women and minorities. Many of these workers will never receive a pension. We know that less than half of all working women are covered by a pension. Those who are fortunate enough to be covered by a plan can expect to receive lower benefits in retirement because their wages were lower during the time they were working.

A recent study noted an alarming trend in private pension coverage among African American and Latino people. This study suggests that many minority workers will become strictly

dependent on Social Security and have a shrinking chance to enjoy financially comfortable retirements.

Moreover, the report shows that the percentage of blacks covered by private pensions of all types plummeted from 45.1 percent in 1979 to 33.8 percent in 1993, only one-third of the population, while the Latino coverage fell from 37.7 percent to 24.6 percent, less than 25 percent, during that same period.

I am hopeful the SAVER Act will be successful in reaching these workers. Many of them live in my district, but let me point out, they do not all live in my district, they live in your hometowns too. They may even be your friends or members of your family. Millions of people will not have any significant retirement income beyond Social Security, which makes the Federal program even more critical, especially at a time when its fiscal future is being questioned.

While the baby-boom generation is on the eve of retirement, this statistical snapshot of the next generation of retirees is fueling the current debate about Social Security. I believe the provisions in the SAVER Act will provide more opportunities to better educate and prepare Americans for their retirement. Today, Mr. Chairman, I hope that this is the beginning of developing real solutions to problems that affect real people.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FAWELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GOODLING], the chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

(Mr. GOODLING asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, we are here today to an address in a bipartisan fashion the real demographic time bomb that faces the American workforce, and I thank the gentleman from Illinois, our chairman [Mr. FAWELL], and the gentleman from New Jersey, the ranking member [Mr. PAYNE], for bringing this legislation before us.

Workers are not saving adequately for their retirement, and this problem will only become more profound as the baby-boom generation continues to age. It does not take a mathematician to recognize that in the future retiring Americans will have to rely less on Social Security and more on pensions and other personal savings.

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Diffusing the retirement time bomb requires immediate action. Educating American workers is the critical first step. Savings are vital to everyone's Retirement Act of 1997, the SAVER Act is that step.

The SAVER Act initiates projects to educate American workers about re-

tirement savings and convenes a national summit on retirement savings. I am pleased to join with my colleagues from across the aisle, both in this body and in the other body, to support this important initiative.

I am also pleased by the support of organizations representing the older Americans, the business community and the financial community behind this public-private partnership.

Far too few workers, especially the young, understand the importance of saving for retirement. Many small businesses are confused as to how to set up some of the new retirement saving vehicles created by Congress, or they do not know how to go about encouraging their workers to take advantage of them.

The SAVER Act creates a statutory mandate for the Department of Labor to help inform American workers about retirement savings, to give them the tools they need to take advantage of the many existing benefits of our retirement system. The SAVER Act also hopes to focus greater public awareness on the lack of retirement savings by convening a national summit at the White House. The summit would be a bipartisan undertaking of both the executive and legislative branches and bring together employee benefit experts from throughout the country.

The SAVER Act seeks to enlist business and other concerned private groups as equal partners in this undertaking and looks to them to pick up their share of the tab as well. Ultimately, we all have a stake in the success of this project. Continuing to educate our workers is not only crucial to Americans having successful careers, it is also vital to ensuring they have secure retirements.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take this opportunity to say thank you to a longtime aide of mine who will be leaving the Committee on Education and the Workforce in the next few weeks. Randy Johnson has overseen, as our Workforce Policy Coordinator, all of the business, labor and workplace issues that have come before our committee since we have been in the majority. And for more than half a decade before that, he served as our labor counsel while we were in the minority.

Randy has been interested in labor issues since law school, when he researched the United Mine Workers contract negotiations. His ability to understand the negotiation process has served as well. Having worked in the Department of Labor before was a real plus for us. Both when we were in the minority and now, Randy has known how to stay true to his principles and yet accomplish our goals of reforming the American workplace. He has a keen understanding of the issues, an astute sense of timing, and a determination to achieve success. I and the rest of our majority Members could not have asked for a better staff member to lead the charge.

I will miss his quiet determination, his strong convictions to our Republican principles, and his hours and hours of dedication to advancing our agenda. We all wish him well and remind him he cannot come up and try to influence members of the committee for 1 year.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from North Dakota [Mr. POMEROY].

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. FAWELL], the chairman, and the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PAYNE], ranking member, for their work on this legislation. I am proud to be its cosponsor, and I think that as we enact this bill, we will be making a very positive contribution to what truly is one of our growing national matters of urgency: Retirement savings.

We are embarking, as we know, on an important debate on Social Security, but regardless of wherever that debate may take us, one thing is crystal clear. We have to save more. We have got to save more. Our savings rate is one-half of what it was in the post-World War II through 1980 period of time. If we think about the worker to retiree ratio, 42 workers per Social Security retiree in the 1940s, heading to 3 workers per retiree in 20 years, 2 workers per retiree in 30 years. It is just so clear, we have to save more.

Add in longevity. Unlike the 1930s, when Social Security came on line, now workers live, on average, 17 years longer in retirement than they did at that time. We have to save more. We will not be able to publicly fund our way out of this one. It is going to require a significant measure of personal responsibility for us all, and that is why this bill is so important.

A critical part of helping people achieve their goal of economic security in retirement is getting them on track with a savings plan to get them there, and let us face it. We can all use some help in that regard.

Education is a critical part of helping people understand the steps they must take now so that they have a secure retirement tomorrow. We know that in the workplace where there are work-based retirement savings plans and educational programs occurring in that place of employment, people attend, they respond, and it improves their savings program significantly. The problem is, less than half of all workers have work-based retirement savings plan, a goal we must work on. But in addition, we must, like this bill accomplishes, get the savings programs out to those not necessarily learning about savings at their workplace. This is going to advance retirement savings for everyone.

Charge the Labor Department to continue their good work. It will help us reach those that are not learning about retirement savings in their place of

employment; it will charge the Labor Department to continue the work they are already advancing in education relative to retirement savings; it will convene the White House summits which will focus national attention on this critical issue.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I again want to thank the ranking member and the chairman. The chairman has indicated he will not be seeking reelection. His contributions, as those of us who know, who have served with him, will continue long after his presence is in this Chamber, and I would like to think that passing his legislation tonight will put on track an important course of education, leaving the chairman's imprint on our very positive step forward in the goal of retirement savings.

Mr. FAWELL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I thank the gentleman from North Dakota [Mr. POMEROY] for his fine comments and his contributions in the area of pensions.

I do want to say also, just briefly, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GOODLING] mentioned Randy Johnson, who is actually seated right behind me here. We have worked together for quite a number of years, and this gentleman is in charge of the areas of labor law, which is something that puts a lot of people to sleep. We need a good lawyer with a good mind to keep track of all of the ins and outs of that area, and Randy has done that dutifully, and then going over into health care, the ERISA statute, which really puts people to sleep, and then into the pension area of the ERISA law.

All of this is very, very vital stuff, and when we have the kind of staff people like Randy Johnson, who, unfortunately, has been picked off by a head hunter, so he will be around in the Washington area. I think maybe after a year is over he probably is going to be coming back and visiting us and saying some things. I believe it is not out of order to say he is going with the National Chamber of Commerce, so we will probably be seeing him around and we wish him nothing but the very, very best. It was a great occasion, and I myself will be retiring. I trust that I have made retirement plans that I can cover those years of retirement.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. CARDIN].

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, let me thank my friend the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PAYNE] for yielding me this time.

I want to congratulate the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. FAWELL] and the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PAYNE] for bringing forward this bill. I think the title really says it all. The title: "Savings Are Vital to Everyone's Retirement."

For two decades we have seen America see savings rates lag far behind the industrial nations of this world. This is

very troublesome to all of us as we look at the economic growth of our Nation. In the last couple of years we have seen an encouraging sign, and that is the budget deficit of this country has gotten smaller, and the deficit was one of the major problems contributing to the low savings rates of our Nation. Low savings rates also present major problems for families looking ahead to retirement.

In recent years, many of us in Congress have worked on a bipartisan basis on creating new incentives to encourage Americans to save. I saw my friend the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. PORTMAN] on the floor a little bit earlier. He has worked on issues with me. We need to do more to encourage retirement savings in this Nation. We have to reverse the trend of less funds being put aside for retirement.

Those efforts have included major pension simplification legislation, including the creation of simple accounts to help small businesses create pension plans, and expansions of IRA accounts. While these legislative initiatives have begun to show benefits in expanding pension coverage and retirement savings, we must do more.

The backbone of our national retirement policy is the Social Security system. But the Social Security system in the long term has significant shortfalls in its funding. We must preserve the viability of Social Security, while encouraging Americans to augment their retirement savings outside of that program. The bill before us will help raise the visibility of this critical issue.

Under Secretary Hermann and former Secretary Reich, the Department of Labor has expanded its efforts to protect retirement savings of working Americans and to increase public awareness of the need to make adequate provisions for a secure retirement.

H.R. 1377 will strengthen those efforts by requiring a national summit on retirement savings to be held at the White House, which will provide the impetus for a full-blown national discussion on retirement policies.

Again, I commend the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. FAWELL], and I commend the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PAYNE]. This is important legislation, and I encourage my colleagues to support it.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to say that I would like to once again thank the chairman for this very important legislation.

As a whole, Americans are motivated to set aside for their retirement. However, they are uninformed and uneducated in many instances about their options. Furthermore, many Americans nearing retirement are worried about whether or not the benefits they have been promised will be there when they retire. Corporate mergers and downsizing to meet the bottom line by encouraging early retirement among older workers may compromise

the integrity of these promised benefits. This is especially true among minority and women workers. Improving awareness and education is a good first step in reconciling the need of social insurance, providing social protection with individual responsibility.

Again, I applaud the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. FAWELL] for his leadership on this issue, and I look forward to working with him to provide retirement security for all Americans and their families. I too would like to wish him well in his retirement from this House for much of the outstanding work that he has done, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1377, Savings Are Vital to Everyone's Retirement Act.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAZIO). All time has expired.

The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. FAWELL] that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 1377.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendment was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FAWELL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the matter just considered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed without amendment a joint resolution of the House of the following title:

H.J. Res. 104. Joint resolution making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 1998, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate had passed a bill of the following title, in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1502. An act entitled the "District of Columbia Student Opportunity Scholarship Act of 1997".

□ 2145

UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEARS 1998 AND 1999

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 1231) to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 1998 and 1999 for the United States Fire Administration, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 1231

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "United States Fire Administration Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1998 and 1999".

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 17(g)(1) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2216(g)(1)) is amended—

(1) by striking "and" at the end of subparagraph (E);

(2) by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (F) and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

"(G) \$29,664,000 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998; and

"(H) \$30,554,000 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999."

SEC. 3. SUCCESSOR FIRE SAFETY STANDARDS.

The Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2201 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 29(a)(1), by inserting "or any successor standard to that standard" after "Association Standard 74";

(2) in section 29(a)(2), by inserting ", or any successor standard to that standard" before ", whichever is appropriate,";

(3) in section 29(b)(2), by inserting ", or any successor standard to that standard" after "Association Standard 13 or 13-R";

(4) in section 31(c)(2)(B)(i), by inserting "or any successor standard to that standard" after "Life Safety Code"; and

(5) in section 31(c)(2)(B)(ii), by inserting "or any successor standard to that standard" after "Association Standard 101".

SEC. 4. TERMINATION OR PRIVATIZATION OF FUNCTIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days before the termination or transfer to a private sector person or entity of any significant function of the United States Fire Administration, as described in subsection (b), the Administrator of the United States Fire Administration shall transmit to Congress a report providing notice of that termination or transfer.

(b) COVERED TERMINATIONS AND TRANSFERS.—For purposes of subsection (a), a termination or transfer to a person or entity described in that subsection shall be considered to be a termination or transfer of a significant function of the United States Fire Administration if the termination or transfer—

(1) relates to a function of the Administration that requires the expenditure of more than 5 percent of the total amount of funds made available by appropriations to the Administration; or

(2) involves the termination of more than 5 percent of the employees of the Administration.

SEC. 5. NOTICE.

(a) MAJOR REORGANIZATION DEFINED.—With respect to the United States Fire Administration, the term "major reorganization" means any reorganization of the Administration that involves the reassignment of more than 25 percent of the employees of the Administration.

(b) NOTICE OF REPROGRAMMING.—If any funds appropriated pursuant to the amendments made by this Act are subject to a reprogramming action that requires notice to be provided to the Committees on Appropriations of the Senate and the House of Representatives, notice of that action shall concurrently be provided to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Science of the House of Representatives.

(c) NOTICE OF REORGANIZATION.—Not later than 15 days before any major reorganization of any program, project, or activity of the United States Fire Administration, the Administrator of the United States Fire Administration shall provide notice to the Committees on Science and Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and Appropriations of the Senate.

SEC. 6. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON THE YEAR 2000 PROBLEM.

With the year 2000 rapidly approaching, it is the sense of Congress that the Administrator of the United States Fire Administration should—

(1) give high priority to correcting all 2-digit date-related problems in the computer systems of the United States Fire Administration to ensure that those systems continue to operate effectively in the year 2000 and in subsequent years;

(2) as soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, assess the extent of the risk to the operations of the United States Fire Administration posed by the problems referred to in paragraph (1), and plan and budget for achieving compliance for all of the mission-critical systems of the system by the year 2000; and

(3) develop contingency plans for those systems that the United States Fire Administration is unable to correct by the year 2000.

SEC. 7. ENHANCEMENT OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS PROGRAMS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term "Administrator, means the Administrator of the United States Fire Administration.

(2) EDUCATIONALLY USEFUL FEDERAL EQUIPMENT.—The term "educationally useful Federal equipment" means computers and related peripheral tools and research equipment that is appropriate for use in schools.

(3) SCHOOL.—The term "school" means a public or private educational institution that serves any of the grades of kindergarten through grade 12.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—It is the sense of Congress that the Administrator should, to the greatest extent practicable and in a manner consistent with applicable Federal law (including Executive Order No. 12999), donate educationally useful Federal equipment to schools in order to enhance the science and mathematics programs of those schools.

(2) REPORTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Administrator shall prepare and submit to the President a report that meets the requirements of this paragraph. The President shall submit that report to Congress at the same time as the President submits a budget request to Congress under section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code.

(B) CONTENTS OF REPORT.—The report prepared by the Administrator under this paragraph shall describe any donations of educationally useful Federal equipment to schools made during the period covered by the report.

SEC. 8. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the United States Fire Administration (referred to in this section as the "Administrator") shall prepare and submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Science of the House of Representatives a report that meets the requirements of this section.

(b) CONTENTS OF REPORT.—The report under this section shall—