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No. 21

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 1, 2000.

I hereby appoint the Honorable RAY LAHOOD to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

We recognize, O gracious God, that prayer is a practice that unites people as no other act can do, and we realize that by prayer we can put aside that which divides us and join with a common voice in words of praise, petition, and thanksgiving.

On this day we recall all who have any special need; those who seek healing and wholeness, those who yearn for peace and concord, those who are hungry or homeless, those who seek friendship and support. We ask for Your blessing, O God, that we will be filled with a new sense of purpose and mission so that in all things we will do justice, love mercy, and ever walk humbly with You. This is our earnest prayer. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Chair's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the Chair's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. McNULTY. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. HERGER led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces that he will entertain fifteen 1-minutes per side.

SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, Baron Rothschild once said, "I do not know what the seven wonders of the world

are, but I do know the eighth: Compound interest."

Mr. Speaker, Baron Rothschild called compound interest the eighth wonder of the world for a good reason. Modest amounts of money, when invested, and then reinvested, grow over time in a spectacular fashion.

Every American deserves the right to save a portion of their FICA tax and control it in a tax-free account that can be invested in an authorized group of funds, just like a 401(k) or a pension plan.

This could save Social Security permanently without a tax increase or a benefit cut. It would ensure that the poorest worker would have a savings account within 6 months of starting work. Within a few years, that worker would be a saver and an investor, getting the benefit of investment return, earning compound interest at competitive rates, not just Treasury rates. For younger Americans this could produce retirements at three to six times the wealth they would get from the government system, and it would protect the system from collapsing when baby boomers retire.

Mr. Speaker, we need to save and strengthen Social Security, and this is a good way to do it.

INTERNATIONAL ABDUCTION

(Mr. LAMPSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to talk about another of America's 10,000 children who have been abducted to foreign countries: David Richard Uhl.

In April of 1998, at age 1, David Uhl was taken from his father, Dr. George Uhl, in his home in Maryland, to Munich, Germany. The United States courts ordered that David's clear best interest was to be in his father's custody and ordered his return.

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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However, the German courts have supported his mother's efforts to keep him from his father and have provided no visitation and have provided no timely ruling on Hague petitions. When George last traveled to Munich in February, a German judge would not order visitation or even tell him where his son was hidden. The lower German court rulings that grant David's mother German custody move through the German appeals court next week, and I am hopeful that George's son will soon be returned to him.

Dr. Uhl and parents like him need our help. Mr. Speaker, we must show respect and concern for the most sacred of bonds, the bond of a parent and a child. When we look at a globe and we see boundaries, but when it comes to uniting families, we must know no boundaries. We must bring our children home.

WORKING SENIORS DESERVE A BREAK

(Mr. HERGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say that working seniors deserve a break, and it is time we gave it to them.

I think most of us in this chamber agree that our Tax Code needs to be fairer. And in order for the Tax Code to be fairer, we must first eliminate the many ways that it unfairly punishes the American people.

Our House took a first step on this front just a few weeks ago when we passed a bill that would give married couples relief from the marriage tax penalty. But just as it is unfair for couples to be penalized simply for being married, it is equally unfair for senior citizens to be penalized simply because they have jobs. Yet the Social Security earning limits is doing just that.

Because of these earnings limits, senior citizens risk losing a large portion of their Social Security benefits if they decide to keep working past the age of 65 and they make more than the law allows. In essence, our government is telling senior citizens that they should not work. Instead, our government should encourage not discourage.

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting to eliminate the Social Security earnings limit.

GUN SAFETY

(Ms. DEGETTE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, another tragedy has struck. Yesterday, a little girl in Michigan was shot and killed by one of her classmates, a 6-year-old boy. A 6 year old, Mr. Speaker. And the question we are all asking ourselves today is, "How in the heck did a little 6-year-old boy get a gun?"

If anybody watched the footage of this on the news last night, they saw a scene that has become all too familiar in this country: A school being evacuated, teachers leading frightened children to safety, sobbing parents frantically looking for their children and, at the end of the day, another dead child, another victim of gun violence.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, another tragedy has struck, but still Congress does nothing to keep guns out of the hands of kids and out of the hands of criminals. This is not the year 1900, this is the year 2000. We have a crisis in this country and Congress is going to go home again today, not to come back until next week, still having done nothing to pass common sense child gun safety.

REPEAL SOCIAL SECURITY EARNINGS LIMIT

(Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, if a senior citizen wishes to be a part of the work force, there is a lot to consider: The work environment, the hours, the wages. There are a lot of things for a working senior to look at. But one that should not have to occupy a senior citizen's mind is the potential impact that their new job could have on their Social Security benefits.

Yet working seniors across the country have to do that because of the Social Security earnings limit. Because of the earnings limit, senior citizens between the ages of 65 and 70 who join the work force risk losing part or all of their Social Security benefits. This is simply not fair.

Senior citizens have spent their entire lives earning these benefits and our government should not be punishing them simply because they choose to keep on working.

Today, House Republicans bring up a bill that will repeal the earnings limit. Many senior groups, including the AARP, support this bill because they recognize that it is unfair to punish working seniors. I hope that my colleagues will agree.

Let us repeal the Social Security earning limits and give our working seniors a break. They have earned it.

WHITE HOUSE IS WRONG ON CHINA AND WTO MEMBERSHIP

(Mr. TRAFICANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, the White House wants China in the World Trade Organization. Unbelievable. China sells nuclear weapons to our enemies. China threatened to nuke Taiwan. Once, China even threatened the city of Los Angeles.

Beam me up. If the White House succeeds in getting China admitted to the

World Trade Organization, I say the White House needs a lobotomy performed by a proctologist.

I yield back a \$350 billion trade deficit, much of it going to China to finance an army that someday may come after us.

SANCTIONS ON IRAQ: A REGRETTABLE NECESSITY

(Mr. BEREUTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks a number of well-meaning but misguided voices have been raised to urge the lifting of economic sanctions against Saddam Hussein's government in Iraq. It has been suggested that lifting the sanctions will alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people.

Iraq does face a humanitarian disaster, but it is a disaster that has been created and perpetuated by Saddam Hussein. The Iraqi leader bemoans the lack of food and medicine, but Saddam has amassed a personal fortune of over \$6 billion, much of it the result of pilfering the donations the international community has provided. While his people have gone wanting, he has built scores of palatial mansions at an estimated cost of \$2 billion.

Recent studies from the Food and Agriculture Organization indicate that more than enough food is available to satisfy the minimal caloric requirements to sustain health. The problem is that Saddam is preventing adequate food and medicine from reaching those groups and regions that most actively oppose him.

Mr. Speaker, Saddam Hussein remains a lethal adversary who has repeatedly sought to circumvent international sanctions and has tried to divert humanitarian aid into military strategic programs. While it is entirely appropriate for the American people to care about the pain inflicted upon the people of Iraq, lifting the sanctions will not alleviate the suffering. We must not be naive, sanctions must remain in force.

DENIAL OF JUSTICE

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, the denial of justice is one of the most egregious fronts to all of democracy, and I can tell all my colleagues that the verdict in the Amadou Diallo police case puts justice on trial.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my voice with that of countless others who are crying out for justice not just for Amadou Diallo but for justice to roll throughout America like a mighty stream. For as long as there is no justice, there can be no peace. The denial of justice for one is a threat to justice for all. No justice, no peace.

This case is troublesome, Mr. Speaker, because it reinforces for many people in this country the feeling that there is a dual system of justice which further divides the Nation. And we know that a Nation, like a house, divided cannot stand.

So I say let us stand together for justice. No justice, no peace.

ANOTHER CHILD LOST TO GUN VIOLENCE

(Mr. LEWIS of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, this morning I rise with a heavy heart. Yesterday, another child, another baby, lost her life to gun violence. This sad day, this great tragedy is made worse by the fact that this little girl was killed by another child.

How long will we tolerate gun violence? How long will we tolerate children killing children? Mr. Speaker, how long will it take for this House to demonstrate raw courage and pass real gun control legislation.

This morning, as we take a moment to consider our failure and to grieve this family's loss, we must not forget to take the time out to teach our children the way of peace, the way of non-violence, to teach them the way of love.

SOCIAL SECURITY EARNINGS LIMIT PUNISHES SENIOR CITIZENS

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, today I want to talk about Meredith T. Jones. She is one of 48,000 Georgians who has found out that being 65 is not as old as she thought it was. She has great health, she has great energy and enthusiasm, particularly with the kids out of the house. So she wants to go to work.

Miss Jones gets a job, feeling good about it, and then comes the IRS. And she has found, like so many other senior citizens, that because she is over 65 that she will lose \$1 in Social Security benefits for every \$3 she earns.

Yet, if she works, she is healthier, she is happier, she is more independent. But the IRS does not recognize that and wants to penalize Miss Jones and 48,000 other Georgia seniors because they are working.

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The Social Security earnings limitation is unfair. It hurts seniors. Republicans have a plan to restore fairness and provide relief for seniors so that they can earn a good living and enjoy productive retirement years without being penalized by the IRS. Mr. Speaker, we need to pass the Social Security earnings limitation.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

(Ms. WOOLSEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, in just 25 years the number of seniors in California will nearly double, from 3.4 million to 6.4 million, but the limited prescription drug benefit that the Republicans have proposed would leave nearly half of those seniors behind.

Low-income drug benefit plans include seniors who are considered middle class if they earn between \$15,000 and \$50,000 a year. These plans ignore the fact that due to the high costs of prescription drugs, many seniors must choose between buying food and buying medicine. That is not right.

Mr. Speaker, in the case of Ivera and Roy Cobb, residents of my district, paying for medications that they both need is absolutely impossible. Roy goes without some of his prescription drugs so that Ivera can have her medications.

The Republican leadership must stop dragging its feet and must enact a meaningful prescription drug benefit that will eliminate price discrimination against our seniors.

OUTRAGE OVER THE SHOOTING AND VERDICT IN THE CASE OF AMADOU DIALLO

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my outrage over the shooting and subsequent verdict in the case of Amadou Diallo, Mr. Diallo, an innocent young African immigrant who came to the United States aspiring for a better life. Plainclothes officers who belong to an overaggressive street crime unit were supposed to be looking for an armed rapist.

Mr. Speaker, was that rapist Amadou Diallo? No. He was simply a black man going home after a long day's work. The officers approached Amadou, and what happened is not completely clear. But in the end, the unarmed young man's body lay in front of his vestibule caught in a hailstorm of 41 bullets.

The reason, the police said, they thought that a wallet was a gun; although he was left-handed, and the wallet was not anywhere near the left hand. A senseless death. But what is even more disturbing was the jury's verdict, which acquitted all the officers of all charges, ranging from second-degree murder to negligent homicide.

Mr. Speaker, let me say we must call upon the Justice Department to investigate this case so that the deepening fear between minorities and the police who are supposed to protect them will end.

CITIZENS' FREEDOM TO WORK ACT

(Mr. GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on the floor today we will be considering the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act. It allows seniors to work, continue to work without affecting their Social Security.

It seems hard to believe that our tax law would actually punish people for working. I am pleased that my colleagues on the Republican side after 6 years have finally decided to help seniors who want to continue working. This is the first we have had a clean vote on this issue.

These are the very same seniors, the ones who cannot afford their medication or their prescription because our Medicare system does not cover it. I am glad that we are actually going to let them now work and earn that money so they can pay for their prescriptions, because this Congress has not passed a bill on that.

Mr. Speaker, it is estimated that approximately 45 percent of seniors have no prescription benefit. These are the seniors who choose every month between buying food, paying their bills, or buying their medication. Some have to buy their medication but skip days just to make it longer.

I am disappointed that this Congress has not moved aggressively on prescription medication for seniors. But at least by passing this bill, we will let them continue to work so they can afford their medication.

FEDERAL INTERVENTION REGARDING THE CASE OF AMADOU DIALLO

(Ms. NORTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, as crime has increased, police have been given freer and freer rein. It is time to reign them in. That is the lesson of the New York City Diallo case. It is difficult to fault a racially integrated jury, but they have written only the first chapter. There are at least three more chapters to be written before we know who is at fault.

Mr. Speaker, Chapter Number 2 must be written by the Justice Department. This is a classic case for Federal intervention, a horrendous police response resulting in the death of an innocent resident.

There are, of course, no appeals in the criminal process. This case calls for a rapid response from the Justice Department. A civil rights investigation, as provided by law, is a vital check in a Federal system.

Chapter 3 in this case must be written with a civil court suit. Even if a police attack is deemed not criminal, no civil society would condone such a response.

Finally, there is a fourth chapter; and we must write that chapter. It should be entitled "Do not send poorly

trained police into our communities to protect us. They are a menace.”

VIOLETION OF CIVIL RIGHTS OF MR. DIALLO

(Mr. MEEKS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, there is an open wound in New York this morning. That wound was caused by a decision that sends a message that the police can fire 41 bullets at an unarmed man of color as he enters his own home.

A healing of this wound could only happen if the Justice Department conducts a thorough investigation of the violation of Mr. Diallo's civil rights.

In addition, they must relentlessly evaluate and find just solutions to the patterns and practices of the New York City Police Department since, clearly, the city's leadership and its mayor and police chief find the police conduct to be okay.

If New York City is to heal, the message must be said that all human life, no matter what race, creed or color, is valuable.

Mr. Speaker, the Justice Department is the only doctor available today that can help us heal the wound in the City of New York. To the City of New York, I say, we are the second chapter to that. We must arm ourselves with the ballot and make sure that we send our message loudly and clearly in November.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICES BEYOND MEANS OF MILLIONS OF AMERICANS

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, Americans already pay more for pharmaceuticals; yet prescription drug prices continue to rise that are well beyond the means of millions of Americans.

Seniors are often forced to choose between medication, food, and daily living. Should seniors have to suffer because they cannot afford overly priced drugs?

I have held four prescription drug surveys in my district which compared prices at different stores of the 12 most commonly used drugs by seniors. The surveys revealed that independent mom-and-pop pharmacies, such as Oliger's, offer lower prices than the same medicines that are charged by drugstore chains.

Many changes are needed to bring prices down. One factor should not be discussed. Large retail chains add to the problem of high drug prices because they routinely charge more than the mom-and-pop pharmacies. Meanwhile, it is time for Medicare prescription drug benefits to take the economic pressure off senior citizens.

SENIOR CITIZENS FREEDOM TO WORK ACT

(Mr. EDWARDS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, we should reward work, not punish work. We should honor citizens who work, not tax them. That is why I urge the House today to pass a bill to let seniors work without losing any Social Security benefits.

It is unfair under present law that 800,000 of our seniors in America lose \$1 in Social Security benefits for every \$3 they earn. The Seniors Citizens Freedom to Work Act deserves our support today. Then, in the days ahead, this Congress should move forward to use our surplus to protect Social Security and Medicare and we should fight to bring down the high cost of prescription drugs for our seniors.

Our seniors have made this a better country. They have earned our support. They deserve our respect and our vote.

MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE IN NEW YORK CITY

(Mr. OWENS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, the polls are showing in New York State that the overwhelming majority of the citizens of New York think that there was a miscarriage of justice in the verdict on the Amadou Diallo killing trial.

Black and white together are demonstrating in the streets of New York against this outrage. Criminally negligent homicide was obvious. Forty-one bullets were fired; 19 in the body after the body was on the ground. This problem of miscarriage of justice in the criminal justice system, unfortunately, is a nationwide problem. It is not only a New York problem.

In Los Angeles, the police are continuing to confess to 20 years of planting evidence on suspects and convicting people wrongly. In New Jersey, they have admitted to systemic racial profiling. Illinois has just stopped the death penalty from moving forward because 13 of 25 inmates on Death Row were found to be innocent.

Two million people are in prison in this Nation. Most of them are minorities. Justice for minorities is a national issue. Justice for minorities is also an international human rights issue.

We are violating human rights on a massive scale. This situation deserves the attention of the Congress of the United States.

ENDING THE EARNINGS LIMIT

(Mr. KUYKENDALL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KUYKENDALL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 5, which is coming up later, the Senior Citizens

Freedom to Work Act. It is important legislation for our seniors.

Seniors between the ages of 65 and 69 currently will lose a dollar's worth of their Social Security benefits for every \$3 they earned over \$17,000. Senior citizens should not be penalized for working. It is unconscionable for this Government to take away these hard-earned benefits.

During the Great Depression, unemployment exceeded 25 percent and wages were plummeting. In 1935, it made sense to create a disincentive for older workers in order to create jobs for new workers, but this policy is no longer needed.

More than 800,000 working senior citizens lose part or all of their Social Security benefits due to this obsolete provision. Today, we will have an opportunity to remove the earnings limit.

I am glad that the President is on board and that he will be able to sign this legislation after we pass it. Ending the earnings limit is good policy for America. It is good for our seniors; it is the right thing to do.

TIME TO RESTORE LOST FAITH IN LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

(Mr. RUSH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, 1 year ago Amadou Diallo was shot to death in the vestibule of his Bronx apartment.

Last week, the four New York City police officers who shot and killed unarmed Amadou Diallo were found not guilty of any crime related to his death and walked out of the Albany courthouse as free men.

Sadly, Diallo's death is the final consequence of a city police system where law enforcement officers are allowed to run amuck.

This dismal loss of life just highlights the need to rein in unchecked police officers and curb reckless, aggressive law enforcement activities. We need better police training, training that addresses diversity and sensitivity issues, training that includes conflict management, how to diffuse a situation without using a gun.

Maybe then we can restore some of the lost faith and trust in law enforcement officers and in the criminal justice system. We have to hold law enforcement officers accountable for their actions. There can be no more Amadou Diallo-like deaths in this Nation.

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MAKING IN ORDER AT ANY TIME CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5, SENIOR CITIZENS' FREEDOM TO WORK ACT OF 1999

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order at any time to consider in the House without intervention of any point of order the bill (H.R. 5) to amend title II of the Social Security Act to eliminate the

earnings test for individuals who have attained retirement age; the bill be considered as read for amendment; the amendment recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means now printed in the bill be considered as adopted; the bill, as amended, be debatable for 2 hours, equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; and the previous question be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I will not object. I strongly support repeal of the Social Security earnings limit and do not intend to unduly delay action on this bill. In fact, repeal of the earnings limit has been part of the comprehensive Social Security reform legislation that the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE) and I have introduced in the last two Congresses.

However, I rise in reservation to this unanimous consent request to express my disappointment that we are considering legislation that will increase Social Security benefits without even discussing the long-term financial challenges facing Social Security. We should have spent the last year working on a comprehensive plan to strengthen Social Security that would restore solvency, reduce unfunded liabilities, give workers greater control of their retirement income, improve the safety net, and reward work; but we, both the President and Congress, have ignored our opportunity to deal with the long-term challenges facing Social Security.

If we are going to pass this legislation increasing costs outside of the context of reform, we should at least be talking about ways to bring more attention to the challenges that remain. The gentleman from Arizona and I had hoped to offer an amendment regarding the recent recommendations of the Social Security advisory board which would more directly confront Congress with the true scope of Social Security's financing challenges. Our amendment would have made a modest step in advancing the discussion about the challenges facing Social Security among policymakers and the public.

Last November, the Social Security Advisory Board Technical Panel released a report outlining a variety of recommendations about how we measure the problems facing the Social Security trust fund, how we talk about those problems and criteria for evaluating reform proposals. Our amendment would have taken the good work of the Technical Panel to encourage a more honest and accurate discussion of the challenges facing Social Security.

The Technical Panel report suggested that the challenges facing Social Security may be even greater than re-

ported. While there has been a lot of discussion about the possibility that a stronger economy will reduce the shortfalls facing Social Security, the Technical Panel warned us that the projected shortfall could increase as life expectancy increases faster than expected.

The panel also made a variety of useful recommendations about additional information that should be included in the trustees' report regarding the size of the unfunded liability and other information illustrating the nature of the problem in greater detail. This type of information would improve the quality of the Social Security debate tremendously, because the facts of the debate would be more clearly established and stated.

Finally, the panel made several recommendations for the evaluation of Social Security reform proposals. In particular the panel suggested that we should look beyond simply determining whether or not a plan restores trust fund solvency and consider other criteria that are as important as, if not more important than restoring solvency over the 75-year period such as the effect on the rest of the budget.

Unfortunately, today we do not have time to discuss any of these issues. I would respectfully encourage the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means and the subcommittee on Social Security to conduct hearings on these recommendations so that they may receive the attention they deserve. I also hope the Social Security trustees seriously consider all of the recommendations of the technical panel.

Mr. Speaker, further reserving the right to object, I yield to my colleague, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE) with whom I have worked closely on strengthening the future of Social Security, a Member who has been a leading advocate of comprehensive Social Security reform legislation that repeals the earnings limit and ensures that Social Security will be strong for our children and grandchildren.

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from Texas yielding to me under his reservation. I will be very brief. Let me just say I feel very privileged today and am proud to be associated with the remarks that the gentleman from Texas just made. The gentleman from Texas has been and continues to be a leader in the fight to have a responsible Social Security reform. The integrity and the unwavering commitment that he has shown for preserving Social Security for future generations are worthy of the respect of all of us in this body.

I am a longtime advocate of repealing the earnings limit. It is a remnant of depression-era policies that have no place in a 21st century economy. I have supported similar measures in the past and as the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) has said, it is a cornerstone of the Kolbe-Stenholm Social Security reform legislation.

However, I am disappointed that Congress is passing this important reform without at least confronting the impact the change is going to have on the trust fund. Like it or not, election year or not, sooner or later this House, this Congress, this Nation must address the financial crisis that looms over Social Security. The longer we wait, the tougher the choices are going to be.

The legislation we pursue today must become one part of a comprehensive reform package. There are no shortage of reform options. There is the one that I mentioned myself that the gentleman from Texas and I have proposed. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) have another one. The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KASICH), those are just a few of the reform proposals that have been offered in this House but have yet to come to the floor, have yet to be really debated. What we lack is will and leadership in this country and we have seen that at both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue.

We should pass this bill today. But I do not think we should be content with this effort. We must recognize that we have an obligation to preserve Social Security for our children and our grandchildren. Mr. Speaker, only real reform will do that.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, further reserving the right to object, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW), the chairman of the subcommittee dealing with Social Security.

Mr. SHAW. I thank the gentleman for yielding to me under his reservation. I would like to compliment the gentleman from Texas as well as the gentleman from Arizona and many more Members of this body for having a genuine desire and actually having stepped forward with regard to some genuine steps to prolong the life of Social Security and even to bring it about as a permanent program that would no longer be concerned about the amount of funding.

The gentleman has taken some bold steps, and he is to be complimented on that. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER), the chairman of the full committee, and I have also put a plan on the table that has a great deal in common with the Stenholm-Kolbe plan, and we had hoped to bring this forward.

History tells us, however, that there is no genuine Social Security reform without the inclusion of the President. Every single major change that has been made in Social Security has been made with the encouragement and the joinder of the White House. Also, it would be wrong and extremely difficult for one party to reform Social Security without being joined by the other party. We have sent out many, many feelers to the White House. I know the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER) has been down and talked personally with the President. He is well aware of your plan, and he is well aware of our plan.

We have also spoken with members of the leadership on the Democrat side and we have also spoken to organized labor and various senior groups. We find now that everything seems to be getting down into presidential politics and to actually quote the President from an interview he had, I think it was a Wall Street Journal some weeks ago, he said that this reform would be left to the next President.

I regret that. But I think that that is a fact of life and it is something that we are going to be faced with. I look to next year, perhaps we could still do it this year. I would like to reach out to the gentleman from California (Mr. MATSUI) and to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) and to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE) and all those who want to reform Social Security.

We are going to have more hearings. We are not going to waste the rest of the year. However, I will say this, and I think this is tremendously important. Part of Social Security reform has been to lock away the Social Security surplus so it cannot be spent. The House has done that. Also, an important part is a bill that we have today, and that is to get rid of this shameful earnings penalty that should have been done away with many, many years ago and was not.

This is a great day, and it is a day for us to celebrate that we are coming together, we have a piece of Social Security reform. This is a very important piece for our seniors. I compliment the gentleman from Texas, and I look forward to continuing to work with him for the rest of the year.

We are going to have hearings; we are going to have hearings on this and many issues pertaining to Social Security between now and the end of this term, and we all will come back next term and really put it away. We are not wasting time, we are going ahead with the hearing process.

However, we need a coming together, we need a joinder, we need to get the presidential election behind us. I would hope whoever the President is, the next President is, that that President, that he will be anxious, willing and reach out to the House and the Senate to reform Social Security for all time.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. STENHOLM. Further reserving the right to object, I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I will take just a moment, but I would like to commend the gentleman from Texas and the gentleman from Arizona. I looked at their proposal. It has been out there now for a year and a half. I have to say it is a very credible proposal. It is probably one of the most realistic proposals that we have before us.

The fact that you have raised this before this matter is brought to the floor is timely, and I am very pleased that you have done so. I would want to say,

however, that both the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) have a proposal, the President has a proposal, and perhaps there will be a time in the next few months where we can bring a number of them, all three, four or five of them, whatever number there are, together to begin to discuss them. Obviously the solving of the Social Security deficit problem is the number one problem we are all facing. But I appreciate the fact that the two gentlemen have raised this issue.

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, further reserving the right to object, and I will conclude by this observation. I would very muchly associate myself with the remarks of the gentleman from Florida. He has been a true worker in this endeavor. He points out some of the pitfalls and the difficulties that we would have this year. But by the same token, and I will have more to say about this in the 2 hours of general debate, I would hope that everybody would recognize that there are those on this side of the aisle that are prepared to reach out in the hands of friendship and bipartisan work to deal with the tough questions and that how we handle this debate politically on both sides of the aisle can again do the kind of damage to the process of which I know the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW), the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER), and the gentleman from California (Mr. MATSUI) do not wish to see happen. So I would hope that we could cushion and caution and soften our words as we debate today about this issue since there is unanimous agreement that this issue needs to happen.

1045

It is the context in which we bring this reservation up.

Mr. Speaker, with those comments, I encourage Members to unanimously support this very good piece of legislation today.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

SENIOR CITIZENS' FREEDOM TO WORK ACT OF 1999

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the unanimous consent request of earlier today, I call up the bill (H.R. 5) to amend title II of the Social Security Act to eliminate the earnings test for individuals who have attained retirement age, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of today, the bill is considered read for amendment.

The text of H.R. 5 is as follows:

H.R. 5

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 "Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act of 1999".

SEC. 2. ELIMINATION OF EARNINGS TEST FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE ATTAINED RETIREMENT AGE.

Section 203 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 403) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c)(1), by striking "the age of seventy" and inserting "retirement age (as defined in section 216(l))";

(2) in paragraphs (1)(A) and (2) of subsection (d), by striking "the age of seventy" each place it appears and inserting "retirement age (as defined in section 216(l))";

(3) in subsection (f)(1)(B), by striking "was age seventy or over" and inserting "was at or above retirement age (as defined in section 216(l))";

(4) in subsection (f)(3)—

(A) by striking "33½ percent" and all that follows through "any other individual," and inserting "50 percent of such individual's earnings for such year in excess of the product of the exempt amount as determined under paragraph (8)."; and

(B) by striking "age 70" and inserting "retirement age (as defined in section 216(l))";

(5) in subsection (h)(1)(A), by striking "age 70" each place it appears and inserting "retirement age (as defined in section 216(l))"; and

(6) in subsection (j)—

(A) in the heading, by striking "Age Seventy" and inserting "Retirement Age"; and

(B) by striking "seventy years of age" and inserting "having attained retirement age (as defined in section 216(l))".

SEC. 3. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS ELIMINATING THE SPECIAL EXEMPT AMOUNT FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE ATTAINED RETIREMENT AGE.

(a) UNIFORM EXEMPT AMOUNT.—Section 203(f)(8)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 403(f)(8)(A)) is amended by striking "the new exempt amounts (separately stated for individuals described in subparagraph (D) and for other individuals) which are to be applicable" and inserting "a new exempt amount which shall be applicable".

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 203(f)(8)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 403(f)(8)(B)) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking "Except" and all that follows through "whichever" and inserting "The exempt amount which is applicable for each month of a particular taxable year shall be whichever";

(2) in clauses (i) and (ii), by striking "corresponding" each place it appears; and

(3) in the last sentence, by striking "an exempt amount" and inserting "the exempt amount".

(c) REPEAL OF BASIS FOR COMPUTATION OF SPECIAL EXEMPT AMOUNT.—Section 203(f)(8)(D) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 403(f)(8)(D)) is repealed.

SEC. 4. ADDITIONAL CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.

(a) ELIMINATION OF REDUNDANT REFERENCES TO RETIREMENT AGE.—Section 203 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 403) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c), in the last sentence, by striking "nor shall any deduction" and all that follows and inserting "nor shall any deduction be made under this subsection from any widow's or widower's insurance benefit if the widow, surviving divorced wife, widower, or surviving divorced husband involved became entitled to such benefit prior to attaining age 60."; and

(2) in subsection (f)(1), by striking clause (D) and inserting the following: "(D) for which such individual is entitled to widow's or widower's insurance benefits if such individual became so entitled prior to attaining age 60.".

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT TO PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING AMOUNT OF INCREASE ON ACCOUNT OF DELAYED RETIREMENT.—Section 202(w)(2)(B)(ii) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 402(w)(2)(B)(ii)) is amended—

(1) by striking “either”; and
 (2) by striking “or suffered deductions under section 203(b) or 203(c) in amounts equal to the amount of such benefit”.

(c) PROVISIONS RELATING TO EARNINGS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN DETERMINING SUBSTANTIAL GAINFUL ACTIVITY OF BLIND INDIVIDUALS.—The second sentence of section 223(d)(4) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 423(d)(4)) is amended by striking “if section 102 of the Senior Citizens’ Right to Work Act of 1996 had not been enacted” and inserting the following: “if the amendments to section 203 made by section 102 of the Senior Citizens’ Right to Work Act of 1996 and by the Senior Citizens’ Freedom to Work Act of 1999 had not been enacted”.

SEC. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The amendments and repeals made by this Act shall apply with respect to taxable years ending after December 31, 1998.

SPEAKER pro tempore. The amendment printed in the bill is adopted.

The text of H.R. 5, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 5

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 “Senior Citizens’ Freedom to Work Act of 2000”.

SEC. 2. ELIMINATION OF EARNINGS TEST FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE ATTAINED RETIREMENT AGE.

Section 203 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 403) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c)(1), by striking “the age of seventy” and inserting “retirement age (as defined in section 216(l))”; and

(2) in paragraphs (1)(A) and (2) of subsection (d), by striking “the age of seventy” each place it appears and inserting “retirement age (as defined in section 216(l))”; and

(3) in subsection (f)(1)(B), by striking “was age seventy or over” and inserting “was at or above retirement age (as defined in section 216(l))”; and

(4) in subsection (f)(3)—

(A) by striking “33½ percent” and all that follows through “any other individual,” and inserting “50 percent of such individual’s earnings for such year in excess of the product of the exempt amount as determined under paragraph (8).”; and

(B) by striking “age 70” and inserting “retirement age (as defined in section 216(l))”; and

(5) in subsection (h)(1)(A), by striking “age 70” each place it appears and inserting “retirement age (as defined in section 216(l))”; and

(6) in subsection (j)—

(A) in the heading, by striking “Age Seventy” and inserting “Retirement Age”; and

(B) by striking “seventy years of age” and inserting “having attained retirement age (as defined in section 216(l))”.

SEC. 3. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS ELIMINATING THE EXEMPT AMOUNT FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE ATTAINED RETIREMENT AGE.

(a) UNIFORM EXEMPT AMOUNT.—Section 203(f)(8)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 403(f)(8)(A)) is amended by striking “the new exempt amounts (separately stated for individuals described in subparagraph (D) and for other individuals) which are to be applicable” and inserting “a new exempt amount which shall be applicable”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 203(f)(8)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 403(f)(8)(B)) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking “Except” and all that follows through “whichever” and inserting “The exempt amount which is applicable for each month of a particular taxable year shall be whichever”;

(2) in clause (i), by striking “corresponding”;

(3) in clause (ii), in the matter preceding subclause (I), by striking “corresponding” and all that follows through “individuals)” and inserting “exempt amount which is in effect with respect to months in the taxable year ending after 1993 and before 1995 with respect to individuals who have not attained retirement age (as defined in section 216(l))”;

(4) in subclause (II) of clause (ii), by striking “2000” and all that follows and inserting “1992.”; and

(5) in the last sentence, by striking “an exempt amount” and inserting “the exempt amount”.

(c) REPEAL OF BASIS FOR COMPUTATION OF EXEMPT AMOUNT AFFECTING INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE ATTAINED RETIREMENT AGE.—Section 203(f)(8)(D) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 403(f)(8)(D)) is repealed.

SEC. 4. ADDITIONAL CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.

(a) ELIMINATION OF REDUNDANT REFERENCES TO RETIREMENT AGE.—Section 203 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 403) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c), in the last sentence, by striking “nor shall any deduction” and all that follows and inserting “nor shall any deduction be made under this subsection from any widow’s or widower’s insurance benefit if the widow, surviving divorced wife, widower, or surviving divorced husband involved became entitled to such benefit prior to attaining age 60.”; and

(2) in subsection (f)(1), by striking clause (D) and inserting the following: “(D) for which such individual is entitled to widow’s or widower’s insurance benefits if such individual became so entitled prior to attaining age 60.”.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT TO PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING AMOUNT OF INCREASE ON ACCOUNT OF DELAYED RETIREMENT.—Section 202(w)(2)(B)(ii) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 402(w)(2)(B)(ii)) is amended—

(1) by striking “either”; and

(2) by striking “or suffered deductions under section 203(b) or 203(c) in amounts equal to the amount of such benefit”.

(c) PROVISIONS RELATING TO EARNINGS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN DETERMINING SUBSTANTIAL GAINFUL ACTIVITY OF BLIND INDIVIDUALS.—The second sentence of section 223(d)(4) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 423(d)(4)) is amended by striking “if section 102 of the Senior Citizens’ Right to Work Act of 1996 had not been enacted” and inserting the following: “if the amendments to section 203 made by section 102 of the Senior Citizens’ Right to Work Act of 1996 and by the Senior Citizens’ Freedom to Work Act of 2000 had not been enacted”.

SEC. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The amendments and repeals made by this Act shall apply with respect to taxable years ending after December 31, 1999.

(b) SPECIAL RULE APPLICABLE TO INDIVIDUALS WHO ATTAIN NORMAL RETIREMENT AGE DURING THE FIRST TAXABLE YEAR ENDING AFTER DECEMBER 31, 1999.—Sections 202 and 203 of the Social Security Act, as in effect immediately prior to the amendments and repeals made by this Act, shall apply to any individual who attains retirement age (as defined in section 216(l) of such Act) during the first taxable year ending after December 31, 1999 (and to any person receiving benefits under title II of the Social Security Act on the basis of the wages and self-employment income of such individual), but only with respect to earnings for so much of such taxable year as precedes the month in which such individual attains retirement age (as so defined).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MATSUI) each will control 1 hour.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 5.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, today is an exciting day for me personally, and it is a great day for the hundreds of thousands of working seniors across this country. It is the culmination of my personal 29-year effort to repeal the earnings penalty.

I launched this effort as one of the first bills that I introduced after being sworn in in 1971. The reason then to repeal the earnings penalty is the same as it is today: the earnings penalty is simply wrong. I also thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON); the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW), the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Social Security; and the Speaker for their tireless efforts on this bill.

The Social Security earnings penalty, like the marriage tax penalty, like the death tax, like the capital gains tax, like the tax on savings, like the alternative minimum tax and so many other taxes, is simply unfair and wrong. It is unfair; it is backwards. The earnings penalty actually cuts Social Security benefits for many working seniors over the age of 65, and it discourages them from working. It increases their effective tax rate to the highest percentage of a lifetime for many of them, and that is wrong.

Now, why in the world would we want to discourage any American, whether they are 17 or 67, from working?

Today this Congress will once again do the right thing and repeal the earnings penalty for those hard-working and deserving Americans. I am proud to be a part of a Congress that fixes what is wrong and does what is right.

It was right to balance the budget and to pay down the debt, and we did that. It was right to strengthen Medicare, and we did that. It was right to cut taxes for families and to promote higher education and expand health care, and we did that. It was right to fix the broken welfare system so that Americans can discover the freedom of work, independence and the power of responsibility, and we did that. It was right to reform the IRS, and we did that. It was right to expand educational opportunities for school children and give more flexibility to parents, teachers and local school boards, and we did that. It was right to stop the raid on the Social Security trust fund and protect every dime of Social Security from being spent on other programs, and we did that.

Now it is right to repeal the earnings penalty for working seniors. They deserve to be treated fairly. After all these years, it is heartening that this effort is finally bipartisan and the President will sign this bill. Clearly it is the right thing to do.

The Social Security earnings penalty punishes seniors who choose to keep working. More seniors are choosing to work past their retirement for many reasons: for their own financial needs, because Social Security benefits for most are not adequate by themselves to support retirement; to help their families or their grandchildren through school; and for their own personal fulfillment. The point is, Americans are living longer now and older Americans can work, they want to work, and they should not be punished by an outdated law if they choose to work.

In addition, repealing the earnings penalty now will unleash the productivity of one of the most experienced and talented workforces in this country at a time when our growing economy needs it. This is clearly a win-win for everyone, which is why the bill now enjoys widespread bipartisan support.

In summary, repealing the earnings penalty is based on the fundamental principles of fairness and freedom. Seniors should be free to work without penalty and treated fairly by a program they paid into all of their lives. Working seniors across this country have waited long enough; and they deserve the action now, and they will get it now.

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

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to congratulate the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), certainly the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) and members of the committee, and also the two prime sponsors of this bill, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON). They have obviously done a great job in getting co-sponsors of this bill and explaining it to Members of this institution.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to reiterate some of the words of the chairman of the committee. The earnings test is obviously something that has been misunderstood over the years. It is basically a penalty on those senior citizens that have earned their Social Security benefit but want to stay in the workforce beyond the age of 65.

The fact that we have had this earnings test actually has deterred over 800,000 Americans a year from the workforce. In fact, we have had some studies done by a University of California San Diego professor that has said that this will actually, by eliminating the earnings test, increase the labor pool in America by 5 percent.

In addition, the Social Security Administration has estimated that the administration of the earnings test

plus the delayed earnings credit essentially costs \$100 to \$150 million a year; and because of the earnings credit, we have seen errors in the range of \$500,000 to \$600,000 per year just in administering this program. As a result of that, it is obvious we should repeal it at this particular time.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope also as we talk about repealing this earnings test, which will be done, we not be unmindful of what the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) and the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE) said in terms of some of the long-term issues of Social Security that I am sure all of us in this institution want to deal with.

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) yesterday when we marked up this bill indicated he will be holding in the month of March, this month, some additional hearings dealing with poverty among women, the blind and the disabled, and I want to thank the gentleman for holding those hearings as well, because I think that will further the procession of making sure that we create incentives for work under the Social Security system for those that need to work and receive benefits at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, I urge an "aye" vote on this particular bill.

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

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW), the highly respected chairman of the Subcommittee on Social Security.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I obviously strongly support H.R. 5, legislation that would repeal the earnings penalty for hard-working seniors age 65 and over. Many seniors are shocked to learn that if they work past the age of 65 they may lose some or even all of their Social Security benefits. This is due to something called the Social Security "earnings limit" or "earnings penalty." This rule has been in place since Social Security started in the 1930's, but that does not make it right.

Because of this rule, many older people left the workforce, making their jobs available for younger workers. That policy may have made sense during the Great Depression when those jobs were needed. However, that clearly does not apply today.

Today's economy needs the experience and ability of seniors; yet the earnings penalty has lived on. Seniors affected by this penalty lose an average of \$8,000 in benefits per year. Nationwide, about 800,000 lost benefits just last year, and thousands more avoided losing benefits by cutting back on how much they worked in order to avoid this unfair penalty.

Some might recall that in 1996 we eased the earnings limit for seniors who reached the full retirement age. As a result, seniors aged 65 through 69 have been able to earn a bit more each year since then without experiencing

the cut in their benefits. While that was a positive step, many of us have long felt that it was wrong to punish hard-working seniors, period, many of whom just want to work, and many of whom have to work.

Mr. Speaker, what message does the earnings penalty send? That the contributions of seniors are no longer needed? That seniors should head for the sidelines of the economy due to age alone? That seniors do not deserve the benefits that they paid for simply because they continue working? I do not think anybody in this chamber or in this Congress feels that way. That is why so many of us have expressed support for H.R. 5, this bipartisan bill before us today, that will eliminate this penalty for good.

A broad spectrum of business and senior groups, including the AARP, support this bill. They know it is good for seniors, it is good for business, and it is good for this country and its economy.

I congratulate the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON), the original sponsors of the bill. I want to congratulate the gentleman from Texas (Chairman ARCHER) for his years of tireless work in relaxing and now repealing this earnings penalty. The gentleman has been a personal testament to what hard-working seniors can do. The gentleman especially should be gratified that all of his years of hard work to repeal this unfair limit are paying off.

Mr. Speaker, eliminating the earnings penalty is the right thing for seniors who have spent a lifetime working for their Social Security benefits. They should get all the benefits they earn and that they have paid for. Today we are taking one major step closer to seeing that occur. I encourage the Senate to approve this legislation quickly so it can be signed into law as promised by the President.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. STARK).

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time and join in the accolades to those who have brought this bill to the floor today, which addresses a problem probably for 5 percent of the wealthiest beneficiaries under Social Security. It is a vestigial prohibition on getting retirement income. No other retirement plan denies that.

I was intrigued this morning as we had all of this bipartisan self-congratulation. The fact is that while we do this, there are partisan rumblings in attacking members of the Democratic Party for sometime in the past perhaps having voted against this procedure in another bill. So I would just as soon unmask for a while, in the most partisan way I can, the Republican charade, because while we are doing this, we are still denying under the Republican leadership the chance for the Patients' Bill of Rights bill to go forward.

It is a bill that was passed in a bipartisan way; yet it is being stalled by the Republicans.

Last year in October in the Committee on Ways and Means, in a bipartisan attempt to pass the Balanced Budget Act, we offered an amendment that would have given a discount on pharmaceutical drugs to every senior, a substantial discount, at no cost to the Federal Government, and every Republican voted to deny the seniors this opportunity to get a discount on their pharmaceutical drugs. So as we talk later today, I hope that the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) will explain to me why that is a good bipartisan thing for the seniors in Florida to be denied a discount, and I hope the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) will come down and explain to us why he voted to deny seniors in Arizona a discount on their pharmaceutical drugs.

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Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON), a respected member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding time to me. I appreciate what he has been doing on this bill. I know he has been working on it for many, many years. We truly appreciate it coming up today.

Mr. Speaker, 1 year ago I introduced H.R. 5, the Freedom to Work Act. Yesterday, every member of the Committee on Ways and Means voted to send the bill to the floor to repeal the social security earnings penalty.

Under current law, our seniors age 65 to 69 can earn only \$17,000 before they lose \$1 in social security benefits for every \$3 they earn. This limit is unfair, outdated, and bad for the economy. This obsolete social security earnings penalty must be eliminated.

As we all know, our seniors have earned social security benefits through a lifetime of contributions. They have worked for them, and they are entitled to their full benefits. It is their money, it is not Washington's money. It should not be taken away from them just because they choose to work after they reach normal retirement age.

The earnings penalty adversely affects 800,000 seniors who reach the normal retirement age. It discriminates against our senior citizens who must work in order to supplement their benefits. That is just not right. The earnings penalty is a Depression-era law whose time has long since come and gone. Today, with unemployment at record lows, seniors are needed in the work force, so the last thing we ought to do is discourage them from working.

Senior citizens who work not only lose a large percentage of their social security benefits today due to the earnings penalty, but they pay social security taxes, Medicare taxes, Federal taxes, and probably State income taxes, as well. Combined with the earn-

ings penalty and these other taxes, our seniors may face a marginal tax rate as high as 80 percent.

The earnings penalty is complicated and difficult to understand. In addition, the earnings penalty is complex and costly to the Federal government to administer. For example, the earnings penalty is responsible for more than half of the social security overpayments.

The Social Security Administration estimates that administering the earnings penalty takes 1,200 people and costs \$150 million a year. Repeal of the earnings penalty would allow our senior citizens to work more, the American economy would benefit from their experience and skills, and it does not cost anything.

According to the Social Security Administration actuaries, a repeal of the earnings penalty will not affect the social security trust fund. Two weeks ago, the President finally agreed to sign the bill. I am pleased that he has decided to help us fix this unfair penalty.

Mr. Speaker, I fought for freedom in two wars, Korea and Vietnam. I believe that freedom entitles our seniors the ability to work without penalty. America's seniors want, need, and deserve a repeal of this penalty.

Mr. MINETA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN).

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

Mr. Speaker, as has been pointed out, last year almost 800,000 seniors had their social security benefits reduced because of this earnings test. Next year, over 600,000 seniors will be forced to defer their benefits because they had earnings over \$17,000.

Today we are passing a commonsense change that allows seniors to be able to earn, be able to continue to work, and be able to collect their social security checks. As the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) pointed out, it will have no effect on the long-term solvency of social security.

For the first time, we allow seniors to continue to earn a paycheck without taking it out of their social security check. Seniors who want to continue working should be able to stay in the labor force without losing their hard-earned social security benefits. At a time with a tight labor market and historically low personal savings, it does not make sense to discourage our most experienced workers from staying productive. Yet, the earnings penalty amounts to a 33 percent marginal tax rate on work.

This change will particularly help women workers, who have historically had lower earnings and an uneven work history. Work for women becomes even more important, and they should not be penalized by the social security system.

Mr. Speaker, let me point out, as my friend, the gentleman from Texas, pointed out during an earlier discus-

sion, yes, many of us would like to see comprehensive reform of our social security system. We should be doing that. But we should not stop making changes that are commonsense, that we can get done, such as removing the earnings test.

I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that the same logic should apply to Medicare. If we are unable to bring forward comprehensive Medicare reform, let us at least agree on prescription drugs. We know in a bipartisan way that we need to do that.

The example that we have used on this earnings test, a bipartisan agreement between the Democrats and the Republicans to move this bill, let us do the same on other issues that are important to all of our constituents.

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH), another respected member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding time to me, the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, who has labored so hard for this commonsense reform so greatly needed for so long.

History reminds us that Arizona's favorite son, Barry Goldwater, in the other Chamber, brought this idea forward long ago. I am so glad, in the spirit of bipartisanship now, that others in previous Congresses so reluctant to address this commonsense reform would join with us today for this landmark legislation.

Almost 20,000 seniors in Arizona, 1.1 million seniors nationwide, are being penalized because they choose to work, are being penalized because they bring to the workplace maturity and experience and energy.

Mr. Speaker, we need those experienced workers in our work force. One thing I have learned in representing the Sixth Congressional District of Arizona, with so many seniors, is that these folks have so much to contribute, so much to give, yes, as volunteers in retirement age, but also active in the work force. That is what they bring and that is what we celebrate today.

So again, we welcome the converts to this, and we are at long last addressing this issue. This is a great day for America's seniors, for all Americans, because today we throw off the yoke of unfairness: an important first step which we must follow in many other ways, but it begins here, it begins now, and we welcome the cooperation.

Mr. MINETA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT).

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, in 1996, I voted to increase the Social Security earnings limit to \$30,000, effectively the year after next. In 1998, I voted to increase it even further, up to \$39,000. So I am, of course, supportive when the Republican leadership finally gives us an opportunity to take the cap off entirely. This bill may help as many as 5 percent of our most successful seniors.

But amid all the self-congratulatory back-slapping that we see here today, let us be sure to understand what this bill is and what it is not. It represents well-justified relief for the top 5 percent. It represents top-down reform, but it does nothing for the 95 percent of the remaining Americans who rely on social security. It does nothing for those seniors whose health does not permit them to work, and who would benefit more from getting access to prescription drugs and an end to the discrimination they face with huge prices they are charged by the pharmaceutical companies.

This legislation is very significant to older Americans who have the capacity to keep earning more than \$30,000 a year, but in terms of overall reform of the Social Security system, to preserve it for future generations, it is a very modest change.

Of all the changes that we can make in this Congress, interestingly enough, this is one of the few that is politically painless. It represents essentially an eat-dessert-first approach to reform. Congress should be grappling with the tough choices that we face on how to extend the solvency of Social Security for all Americans and for future generations of Americans, not just the politically easy step that primarily puts more benefits in the pockets of the most successful seniors, coincidentally, during an election year.

I would say this morning, better a reform for 5 percent than no reform at all. But for most Americans who are counting on Social Security, this change makes no real difference in their lives. It is long past time that this Congress got about doing something for them.

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY), another respected member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me. I thank the chairman for his hard work on this bill. Since 1986 the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER), the chairman of our committee, has been working on this product, joined with the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), now, and with the leadership of the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON), we see victory today for senior citizens.

But even in light of victory, we have to have a little bit of a political zinger put on the floor by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT). He has to drill a little needle there into this debate, rather than celebrate the rewards of senior citizens across America.

At 65, under this policy that was maintained by 40 years of Democratic leadership, we were telling seniors, get out of the way, you are too old and you are too tired. Modern-day America recognizes, and particularly our party recognizes, that seniors 65 are in the prime of their lives.

My father at 77 years of age retired as a principal of a high school in Lake

Worth, Florida. He contributed to the children of Palm Beach County schools, and he did it because, first and foremost, he loved children, and secondly, he had a lot to give to our community.

But no, for many, many years they blocked the attempt to reform this crazy notion of retirement at 65, or penalizing, should one work.

Mr. Speaker, let us face reality. Just like social security predicts that more retirees than active workers will exist in 10 or 20 years, so will be the notion of less workers available for active duty. This bill provides relief for the baby boomers who will retire to stay engaged and stay working.

So today, rather than taking political shots across the aisle, let us join hands in this bipartisan spirit. But I must insist on commending the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER), because he has been working on this when he was in the minority, and finally now has had comity from the other side of the aisle to bring this measure to the floor; the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT) in the same period, and again, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) from my district.

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) and I have probably the 6th and 7th oldest Medicare recipient districts in the Nation. So today I join my good friend, the gentleman from south Florida, in saluting our retirees who worked so hard to pay to run the government of the United States of America.

Mr. MINETA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON), the original sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be here today, along with my good friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON), bringing this bill forward.

This is something that I have been for for a long time. I used to do tax returns for a living, and saw firsthand the impact this had on people. This is something that probably made sense back in the thirties, but its time has past. It is time for us to get rid of this penalty, which causes these people to pay some of the highest marginal tax rates in this country.

My district is a very rural district. We are having a lot of trouble out in the farm part of the district. In the cities, St. Cloud is a big city, and Moorhead, which is a middle-sized city, or Aurora, which is a small city, the problems we are having is getting enough workers to fill the jobs that we have out there.

In this pool of workers that are being penalized, we have a lot of people that have talent that want to work, and this is going to free up a lot of folks to do what they want to do. It makes sense.

One other thing I want to focus on. One of the things this will solve is, part

of the problem our farmers are having is with their being taxed on the rent that they are charging for their farmland. The IRS, because apparently one word was left out of a statute, are forcing farmers to pay self-employment tax on their rent. These are the only businesspeople in America that are doing this. If you are in the real estate business, if you are a CPA, if you rent a building or land to your kids or to anybody else, you do not pay self-employment tax, but farmers do.

If they pay this self-employment tax, they can also be subject to the self-employment tax penalty that we are getting rid of here today, so this is going to solve part of the problem.

We appreciate the chairman's leadership on this issue, and we hope the gentleman would look at the other part of the problem, because it really is crazy, what we are doing to farmers. They have tremendous pressure on them now. In my district, none of them are making any money.

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The last thing they need is to have another tax put on them. So we would appreciate a look at that.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota. I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. SHAW. The gentleman has brought up a very sensitive point.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The time of the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON) has expired.

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. HOUGHTON), another respected member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield briefly to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW).

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON) brought up a point that we are waiting for the Commissioner of Social Security to reply to, because he has raised a very good point and something that our committee intends to address. I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. HOUGHTON) for yielding to me.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER) for yielding me this time. It is sort of too bad that certain people on the other side take a partisan view of this thing. It is not partisan; it is bipartisan. It makes sense. The timing is right. There is overwhelming support for this.

When I started to work in the early 1950s, 47 percent of the people over 65 were working. Today, only 17 percent. That is not very good.

I always think as the speed of light and communication and data processing is sort of inevitable, so is the fact that people are living longer.

I have a mother who is 99 years old, born in 1900. When she was born, the actual actuarial age of women was

about 47. That was the life span. Today, it is in the 70s. Tremendous difference.

We need able people. Warren Buffett of Berkshire Hathaway has a lady over 90 years old working in his company. When companies get somebody good, they want to hold on to them. And people who work longer, they live longer, they feel healthy and want to make a contribution. So anything standing in the way, which is this double taxation of their Social Security benefits, is wrong and is not fair and it will be scrapped, and should be scrapped, if H.R. 5 goes through.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say one other thing. There was a lady called Marijo Gorney, and she has worked around here for 35 years. She is now retired. Mr. Speaker, this was her baby. This was her concept. She pushed it. She is now retired; and I hope she is watching this, because a lot of the success of this program is due to her.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. NEAL) a member of the committee.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer my voice in support of repeal of the earnings test, and I am certainly pleased that the Committee on Ways and Means acted so quickly, once President Clinton urged us to do so on February 14. I only wish that at the committee level we could be as accommodating on some other issues.

The retirement test is clearly a provision which has outlived its usefulness. With senior citizens living longer and longer, we should encourage those who want to continue to work, rather than discourage that effort. I do wish that we had the ability in committee to make some additional changes, however, such as offering the government pension offset that was sponsored by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JEFFERSON).

Mr. Speaker, this unfair provision affects the spousal benefits of State and local workers and was enacted in response to a Supreme Court case that dealt with an entirely different problem. It is now time for that provision to be repealed as well, or at least significantly modified.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good bipartisan bill. I hope it reaches the President's desk soon, and I hope it will serve as an example that reaching an agreement when we can is far better for the American people than producing what is oftentimes so much unnecessary conflict in this institution. I am pleased to lend my name in support of this initiative. It is long overdue, but the point is that we are acting on it today. I think that there is an opportunity here for a lot of people to take some satisfaction from this initiative.

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS).

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

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER), my friend and the distinguished chairman, for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise, obviously, in strong support of H.R. 5. As just one of many on this side of the aisle who has worked hard to eliminate the archaic and punitive Social Security earnings test since coming to Congress 12 years ago, I am delighted that today we are finally going to right this wrong.

I represent many seniors in southwest Florida who have eagerly awaited this moment and I know are going to be very happy. Last year, over 800,000 seniors across America were penalized simply because they chose or needed, needed, to remain productive members of our workforce. In an ever-expanding economy where employers increasingly lack capable and experienced employees, the Federal Government contrarily sends a message that our seniors need not apply.

I know it is true, because I hear it firsthand from working seniors in southwest Florida who choose to stay active and supplement their retirement, perhaps as a cashier at the local grocery store or perhaps as a substitute teacher at the middle school.

Proud Americans who survived the Depression and defeated Hitler's Germany are punished for displaying the same self-reliance, perseverance, and individual responsibility that defines them as our greatest generation and, frankly, has made our Nation as great as it is today. It is a national embarrassment that we will end today.

Today, finally, and I say finally, the White House and congressional Democrats will apparently join with us in ending the unfair earnings tax. But it was not always so. Just 2 years ago, only 19 Democrats voted to end the earnings limit. But in the best spirit of our representative democracy, we have made our case and we have persuaded them, or at least most of them, to join us. This has been a long and trying fight. And besides the gentleman from Texas (Chairman ARCHER) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW), my Florida colleague, and the gentleman from Texas (SAM JOHNSON), courageous souls like Jay Rhodes no longer here, JIM BUNNING in the other body, who should be here to celebrate with us today I hope are taking joy in this.

Above all, we should cheer our Speaker, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT) who led the fight for incremental reform before it was fashionable and who appropriately will preside over this Congress today as we end this tax on working seniors once and for all. I urge a "yes" vote.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. PRICE).

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Seniors Freedom to Work Act. More than 800,000 senior citizens aged 65 to 69 in our country lose part or all of their Social Security benefits each year because of this so-called earnings test.

Currently, the Social Security earnings penalty takes \$1 in Social Security benefits from Americans 65 through 69 for every \$3 they earn above the \$17,000 per year limit. When Americans turn 65, they ought to be able to count on the Social Security benefits they have earned, and this bill would repeal the earnings test once and for all.

Mr. Speaker, this is a bipartisan bill. But unfortunately, there has been a little partisan byplay here today; not from our side of the aisle, but from our friends on the Republican side. They are accusing us of reversing ourselves on this issue. They are referring to what in 1998 we aptly termed the Raid Social Security for an Election Eve Tax Cut Act. I would like to just read what I said at the time we debated that bill:

"The problem is not with the specific tax cuts, but with using the Social Security Trust Fund surplus to pay for them. These tax cuts are also contained in the Democratic substitute", in fact, it included exactly identical earnings test provisions, "but they are paid for in that substitute and they maintain the trust in the trust fund."

So what we have before us right now, Mr. Speaker, is clean legislation that addresses the earnings test issue, unencumbered by controversial or extraneous provisions. Today, we have an opportunity for a bipartisan bill, a bipartisan result, and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY), Majority Leader of the House of Representatives.

Mr. ARMEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER) for yielding me this time. I just wanted to take a moment to add my word of appreciation for everybody's good work on this. There can be nothing I can imagine that can be more unfair to our working senior Americans than to be told that under the law of this land that they are required to pay into the Social Security program all their working years, and then at that time in their life when they are entitled to withdraw the benefits that they paid for, that the government of the United States is going to take those benefits away if they have the audacity to continue work.

Many of us have seen the injustice of this, and so many of us have worked on it over the years and had so many years of frustration.

Mr. Speaker, I always like to remind people that this is the very first bill that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER) introduced in Congress in 1972. I studied it as an undergraduate. I understood at the time how important it was. I have watched the gentleman from Texas (SAM JOHNSON), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER), and the Speaker himself and others, and it is just such a heart-warming thing for me today to see us passing this legislation with such bipartisan support.

The President committed to sign it, and we will finally have a real act of justice and fairness for today's working seniors. I just wanted to share in that moment with all of our body.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) the ranking member on the Committee on the Budget.

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

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. MATSUI) for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in full support of this bill, the retirement earnings test is an old vestige of the 1930s, created when Social Security was born as a way of telling who was truly retired and, therefore, qualified for benefits. It was looked upon as good policy then because it spurred older workers to stop working and take their Social Security benefits and, therefore, freed up jobs for younger workers in what was then, the 1930s, a period of high unemployment.

Today, we do not have a labor surplus in most parts of the country; we have a labor shortage. For example, I had an owner of a trucking company call me a few months ago and tell me in desperation that this offset policy in Social Security was causing him to lose drivers. They would not work upon reaching the age of 65, and he could not replace them. He saw no reason for this policy, and I can tell from talking to other workers in my district neither do they.

We can explain all the reasons behind it, going back to 1935, but most people see this as a stiff, unfair, tax on hard-working people. I think it is time for us to repeal these offsets all together for those people who have reached retirement age. The question arises: Why did we not do this in 1998? There has been some accusation here that some of us who voted for that particular tax bill then, which was an \$8.1 billion tax bill in 1998, voted against the elimination of the threshold. That bill would not have eliminated the threshold. It would have raised the threshold to \$39,750 by 2008.

But in 1996, almost all of us came out here and voted for H.R. 3136, the Senior Citizens' Right to Work Act of 1996. This bill raised the limit in annual steps from \$12,500 to \$30,000 by 2002, and indexed the threshold after 2002 to rise with the rate of inflation. Had we simply followed the course of that law, by 2008, the threshold would have been about \$38,000, just a little bit less than the bill in 1998 provided.

So this argument is really not a fair argument. I am glad to see us bring something to the floor that is bipartisan. Let us keep it bipartisan. I do not think I need to encourage anybody to vote for this. The vote is going to be overwhelming. And any time we get this kind of bipartisan consensus on an issue of this substance, it is a sign of an idea whose time has come.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is right that we repeal today, right now, as soon as possible, this old and outdated vestige of the Social Security system and say this is something on which we all agree.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER), one of our great committee members.

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

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, today's debate is all about fairness. This Congress has accomplished so much over the last 5 years, and I am proud that just in the past year we have accomplished our goal of stopping the raid on Social Security for the first time in 30 years and we balanced the budget without touching one dime of Social Security, paid down \$350 billion of the national debt, and 3 short weeks ago this House passed with 268 votes, 48 Democrats joining with every House Republican, legislation wiping out the marriage tax penalty for 25 million married working couples who pay higher taxes just because they are married.

Like the marriage tax penalty, the earnings limit on our seniors is an issue of fairness. And I want to commend the Speaker of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), the gentleman from Texas (Chairman ARCHER), the gentleman from Florida (Chairman SHAW), and the gentleman from Texas (SAM JOHNSON) who have been tireless leaders and fighters for this effort to bring fairness to seniors.

Mr. Speaker, let us not forget that this effort to repeal the earnings test on seniors was part of the Contract with America. It is unfinished business. For far too long, seniors who work after age 65 have been punished. Since the 1930s, seniors who live longer, want to be active longer and work longer, have been punished. 800,000 seniors in America, 53,000 seniors in my home State in Illinois, are punished just because they want to work when they are age 65 or older.

I think of my own parents, farmers in their early 70s today who want to work and be active longer. Like millions, they suffer.

Mr. Speaker, the earnings limit on seniors is wrong. Let us repeal it. I appreciate the fact the President now says he will sign it into law. That makes it a bipartisan effort. I commend the chairman and commend the Speaker and commend the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) my friend, for their leadership. Let us get the job done. I ask for an "aye" vote.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN).

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, success has many fathers; failure is an orphan. This bill is an outstanding bill and we are all fighting over paternity.

It is a bill that will help our economy by bringing experienced workers into a labor shortage work environment. It is

a bill that will help 800,000 seniors and it is a bill that will actually help Social Security by bringing additional Social Security revenue and income tax revenue into the Federal Government as additional seniors enter the workforce.

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As to the fight over paternity, it is a Democratic President who stood here in his State of the Union message and urged us to pass this bill and the Democratic alternative bill in 1998 which provided an increase in this limit which we are now going to repeal, and that alternative bill would have been signed into law. We voted for a bill that would have dealt with this issue in 1998 and would have become law.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. SWEENEY).

Mr. SWEENEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise very briefly to congratulate the gentleman from Texas (Chairman ARCHER). I rise in strong support to repeal the earnings limitation for Social Security recipients. I am particularly pleased to be an original cosponsor of this legislation. And I want to congratulate the gentleman from Texas (Mr. JOHNSON).

We have had a lot of debate and discussion over whose idea this was, but I think the record is very clear and will very clearly show that we, the majority in Congress, over the last 5 to 6 years have really begun to move forward in a meaningful way to bring steps towards comprehensive reform of Social Security. I am proud to join that effort. This is good for senior citizens, and it is good for America.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support us in this endeavor.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), a member of the committee.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5, bipartisan legislation, to repeal the Social Security retirement earnings test. I am a proud cosponsor of this legislation which has the backing of so many of us on the Committee on Ways and Means.

This legislation is supported by the Clinton administration. Indeed, the President called for repeal of the test more than a year ago.

As the Subcommittee on Social Security learned during the hearing on this bill on February 15, the retirement earnings test is both confusing to beneficiaries and difficult to administer. It discourages older people from remaining in the workforce and contributing to our country's economic growth. It is past time to eliminate this disincentive to work.

The bill repeals the test for workers who attained the normal retirement age. Its repeal will allow literally hundreds of thousands of Social Security recipients to work without a reduction in their benefits. This is an idea whose time has come.

It is important to note that the repeal does not adversely affect the long-term financial health of Social Security.

This bill shows that members of the committee can work in a bipartisan way. I hope this effort remains such.

Let me stress that passage of H.R. 5 today is not in any way a substitute for comprehensive Social Security reform. Congress must redouble its efforts to pass legislation to extend solvency of the fund.

Again, the President has proposed legislation that would defeat the interest savings earned by paying down the publicly held debt to make Social Security stronger. This would extend the solvency of the program to 2050.

There is an old proverb that says that a journey of 1,000 miles begins with a single step. We are taking a good first step with the passage of H.R. 5 today. It should not, Mr. Speaker, be our last.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. HERGER), an esteemed member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, what could be more fair than allowing seniors to continue working without losing Social Security benefits?

Today we are voting on legislation to end the outdated Social Security earnings limit. Under this legislation, more than 800,000 seniors nationwide will have the opportunity to work without seeing their Social Security benefits reduced.

Consider a senior in my district in northern California who is between the ages of 65 and 70 and who earns \$20,000 a year to supplement their Social Security benefits. Under current law, this senior will lose \$1,000 in Social Security benefits due to the earnings limit.

At a time when our U.S. workforce needs the skills seniors have to offer, this disincentive to work makes absolutely no sense. Our seniors deserve the freedom to work without being penalized for it.

This legislation before us today is based on the principles of fairness and freedom. Seniors should be treated fairly after paying into Social Security all their lives. They should have the freedom to work without worrying about losing their benefits.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that this legislation is fiscally responsible. It does not affect the long-term solvency of the Social Security trust fund.

I commend the President for supporting our position to end the outdated earnings limit. Mr. Speaker, let us give all our seniors the freedom and the fairness they deserve. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN).

(Mr. GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank not only the gentleman from California (Mr. MATSUI) but also the members of the Committee on Ways and Means for allowing me to speak.

I rise in support of the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act, a legislation that I am proud to be a co-sponsor of and will vote for today.

It seems hard to believe that our tax law actually punishes people for working. Yet under the current law, 48,000-plus Texans lose all or part of their Social Security payments each month simply because they want to work. Now if one can work after one is 70 years old, one is not penalized.

Seniors who have worked hard their whole lives and paid into the Social Security system for decades should get their Social Security benefits regardless of whether they continue to work. This important legislation puts an end to the inequitable treatment of seniors.

My only concern, Mr. Speaker, is that, hopefully, this is not a step toward increasing the retirement age, Congress already did that once, instead of using 65. So hopefully this will not happen.

This is a clean bill. It is not loaded down with other provisions. So it does not bust the Federal budget caps that we have talked about.

Hopefully, this Congress can address other senior citizens issues, providing prescription medication for seniors, because allowing them to work still may not pay for it.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH), a respected member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. ENGLISH. Mr. Speaker, I particularly want to congratulate the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW), chairman of the Subcommittee on Social Security, for his extraordinary leadership, not only on this issue, but in moving forward to make Social Security more solvent.

Mr. Speaker, today Congress says to seniors, you may choose to work, choose to remain part of the productive economy, and choose to share your talents. Right now the Social Security system places a higher tax penalty on working seniors than on billionaires. We have been sending seniors the message that when they hit retirement age that we do not want them anymore. We need to change that.

The earnings limit was created 60 years ago, and it is a relic of Depression-era economics that says seniors should make room for younger workers. We now know that seniors add more to the workforce and more to the economy than they can ever take away. They add their years of experience, their expertise, their talents.

This legislation repeals the earnings limit that unfairly punishes seniors who earn more than \$17,000 a year. This arbitrary limit serves as a barrier to many low- and middle-class seniors who take on a job because they need to

work in order to improve their quality of life or even just to make ends meet. They must not lose Social Security benefits that they earn simply because they choose to work.

The Social Security Administration reports that more than 800,000 working seniors between the ages of 65 and 69 lose part or all of their Social Security benefits due to this outdated limitation. That is an outrage.

In Pennsylvania, we are sixth in the number of seniors adversely affected by the earnings limit; 48,000, over 48,000 Pennsylvania seniors are penalized for working.

I urge my colleagues to join the AARP, join the Subcommittee on Social Security, and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) and vote in favor of this legislation. It is important that Congress protect the dignity of retirement and unshackle the creative energies of America's seniors.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL).

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. MATSUI) for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for the leadership in working to bring to the floor this very important piece of legislation.

We are focusing on reforming our existing Social Security program, correcting an unfairness that impacted 800,000 seniors last year. It provides an incentive for those skilled, dedicated committed workers to continue to work and enhance our society.

I want to bring one thing, Mr. Speaker, to the attention of the folks here today; and that is this, we have been told by Mr. Greenspan that one of the greatest threats to the growth in the economy is we do not have enough workers, skilled workers, to produce the supply for the demand that is out there.

This is a very unusual situation that we are in. Thank God for the seniors who are going to bail us out, because this will be an incentive for them. This is critical. This is something that we need, and we are working together finally. By the way, does it not feel good to work well on things that America needs?

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), the Speaker of the House.

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

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, when one looks at the genesis of an idea, why a bill like this comes into being, sometimes it has not just happened overnight. This particular bill, this has been worked on for almost 20 years.

I remember the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER) when he first came

to Congress talked about this. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY) tried to push this concept. He brought together economists that shows there is really a positive effort when people work. The positives, when one does dynamic scoring, really has outshone what the negatives were, and that was the payment is out of the Social Security trust fund.

Then 14 years ago, the 100th Congress decided that this was a project that was something that was important for people. For 14 years, we have been trying to get the Social Security earnings limit, as we call it, changed. We did change it. Twelve years ago, one could earn \$10,000; and anything over \$10,000, every \$2 that one earned one lost a dollar in one's Social Security. Then we kind of phased it out to \$3, and it went up from \$10,000 to \$13,000 to \$17,000 today.

But the fact is, when a senior citizen goes to work at McDonald's or starts his or her own little business or, like the lady 10 years ago when I bought Valentine flowers for my wife at the florist shop, she said, Congressman, I had just came back to work in January. I had stopped work last October because I was up against the earnings limit, at that time about \$10,000. I had to leave my job. Or the seamstress at the little corner dress shop that the owner came out to me and said, I am going to lose my seamstress because she has reached that earnings limit. That was in November just at a busy time.

So the unfairness of the earnings limit for today's worker certainly has been apparent, and it has been apparent for a long time.

Slowly, but surely, we have been able to move this bill to a point where we can pass it and we can give equity to seniors, people who are over the age of 65 that do not want to relegate themselves to a rocking chair.

Now, quite frankly, some seniors at age 65 want to retire, and God bless them. They should be able if they have had that productive life. But the issue is that seniors who maybe did not have to work by the sweat of their brow their whole life, that they have unearned income, if they have pensions and they have retirement accounts, they were not penalized by the earnings test.

The people that were penalized by the earnings test were people that had to go out and earn by the sweat of their brow, people that were never to save up, never to have an IRA, never to be able to have a lot of money in pensions, people that had to go out and work every day to feed their families, to make ends meet. Now they are 65 years of age and, all of a sudden, they have a big government tell them, oh, by the way, you can get Social Security, but you cannot work anymore.

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"You cannot work to send your grandchild or child on to college; you

cannot help earn that tuition for your family and, by the way, you cannot have that car that you would like to have to go on vacation because you cannot earn more than this amount of money because you are going to be penalized."

This is wrong. It has been wrong for a long, long time. And especially in today's economy, when seniors are valued, because it is the seniors that have work ethics. It is the seniors that put in a full day's work, and they know the value of work. People like Sears Roebuck and J. C. Penney and McDonald's, and on and on, have been telling me for over a decade that they want those seniors in their ranks. Because not only are they good workers, people they can depend on, but for people entering the work force they are great people to train. It is a good ethic to pass on.

So we cannot afford to keep this resource, these people who have built this country, these people who want to contribute, even into their retirement, to what America is all about, we cannot afford to keep them out of this process.

I want to again say that I urge everybody to vote for this bill. And I am very pleased that the President has endorsed this piece of legislation. I think it is good, as the gentleman said, that we have found something that we can work on, something that lifts the American people and gives them a better future.

I want to also thank certainly the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) for bringing this legislation up, and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON), who has worked on this as a pioneer for years, and JIM BUNNING, who used to be a Member of this body worked on it for years and years. There are a lot of people and a lot of history here.

I think it is time that this bill passes, and I urge everybody to stand up and vote "yes." Thank heavens this is here, a time of salvation for our seniors.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. SHOWS).

Mr. SHOWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for H.R. 5, to repeal the Social Security earnings limit.

I am pleased finally to have the opportunity to bring this to a vote. After all, House Democrats have long supported repealing the earnings limit, but within the framework of comprehensive Social Security reform, to protect the Social Security Trust Fund and make sure it is there for seniors who need it.

The Republican tax cut actually held the Social Security earnings limit hostage to election year politics. Their proposals would have raided the Social Security surplus to fund huge ill-conceived tax cuts, of which repeal of the earnings limit was one small part.

Seniors will not be fooled by a political effort to tie repealing the Social

Security earnings limit to a tax cut that would have been funded by raiding the Social Security surplus.

I support eliminating the earnings limit. More than that, I support being honest with our seniors.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT).

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

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and I rise in strong support of H.R. 5, bipartisan common sense legislation to repeal the Social Security earnings test.

I believe the Social Security earnings test should be eliminated. Simply put, this provision of the Social Security law has outlived its usefulness. It is a relic from another time. It survives only to punish older Americans for their productivity.

Today, most seniors continue to work at least part time after retiring. These men and women have some of the most dedicated and experienced skills to bring to our work force. And, as a Nation, we should be doing everything we can to encourage them to continue to contribute their time and their talents, not penalize them for doing so.

H.R. 5 would repeal this limit entirely, effective immediately. It is a bill that is worthy of our unanimous support. The President proposed it; both parties support it. It is simple, we need to pass H.R. 5.

We also need to undertake a comprehensive legislative fix that would use the projected budget surpluses to extend the life of Social Security and Medicare and pay down the debt.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN).

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and I rise in strong support of repeal of the earnings limit for Social Security recipients between 65 and 70 years of age.

When I talk to employers in Maine, many cannot find all the employees that they need. Many seniors between 65 and 70 want to work but are discouraged from doing so by the Social Security earnings limit. This bill will help seniors who want to work and employers who want to hire them.

This bill is also an example of what Republicans and Democrats can do when we bring to the floor legislation on which we can agree. In 1998, I voted for a Democratic proposal to lift the earnings limit, but I pointed out at that time that the competing 1998 Republican plan included tax cuts that did not protect Social Security surpluses. That was the wrong approach and I opposed it. This bill is the right approach, and I am proud to support it.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY).

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5, to repeal the Social Security earnings test. It is long overdue.

It makes absolutely no sense to penalize older Americans for participating in the work force at any time. It makes particularly no sense to penalize older Americans at a time when businesses are clamoring for qualified workers. Our most experienced workers should not be left out of America's work force, out of America's future.

Many of the seniors in the district I represent in southern Nevada have asked me to champion this issue on their behalf. They have so much energy, so much talent, so much to continue to give this great country. Congress must repeal this obsolete earnings limit and give seniors the freedom to work without penalty.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE).

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

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this proposal and commend the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) for their efforts in this endeavor.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS), a member of the committee.

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, if we are to climb the mountain of tax reform, we have to take it one step at a time; and I think the right approach is to aim first at individuals and remove the burden of excessive taxation and complicated regulations.

The very first place to start is by scrapping tax penalties. Why hit people with a heavier tax burden for being married, for working after retirement, or for building a family business or farm? The Senior Citizens Freedom to Work Act is an important step to remove one of those penalties. It will end the Social Security earnings limit which discourage seniors from continuing to work.

This legislation follows an important first step we took a couple of weeks ago with the passage of the marriage penalty tax relief. Finally, I hope that we will take a third step, and that is by helping families by eliminating the death penalty tax which hammers families, family-owned businesses and farms.

Mr. Speaker, let us keep moving forward, making progress in tax reform and support H.R. 5.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST).

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 5, legislation that is long overdue for our Nation's seniors.

In 1999, an estimated 1.2 million beneficiaries had some or all of their benefits withheld for some portion of the year under the Social Security earnings test. About 800,000 beneficiaries lost some or all of their benefits under the test as a result of their work at ages 65 to 69. Additionally, the benefits of 150,000 family members were limited or withheld due to the earnings of the primary beneficiary.

Mr. Speaker, for many seniors, working after the age of 65 is not an option. Facing mounting bills for prescription drugs and the increasing cost of living, it is something they must do to continue to pay their bills. We should be doing everything we can to increase the standard of living for these valuable employees.

Older women in particular face a major hardship from the earnings test. The poverty rate for women is higher than the poverty rate overall, and women have a greater reliance on their Social Security benefits for income. Widows account for 66 percent of aged women in poverty. There are 1.2 million aged widows who receive Social Security benefits and have had incomes below the poverty line.

Because women live longer, have lower lifetime earnings and, therefore, for dependent on Social Security benefits, they are more likely to be working well past the traditional retirement age. We need to boost the Social Security earnings for this most vulnerable group of seniors rather than putting roadblocks in their path.

Mr. Speaker, repealing the earnings limit is good for seniors and good for employers too. Older workers are exactly the type of employees that businesses want. They are dependable, experienced, and have a strong work ethic. We should be encouraging these workers to remain in the work force instead of trying to force them out. As the number of older workers grows, and the need for quality employees becomes more acute, we need to take advantage of the experience and skills that older workers provide.

Eliminating the earnings test is not only the fair thing to do for working seniors but it will improve the quality and efficiency of the Social Security program as well.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. RAMSTAD), a member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time and for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this bill to get rid of the Social Security earnings limit. I have been an original cosponsor of this bill many times, and I am pleased that we have gotten to this point today.

The need for this bill was really brought home to me last Friday. In my district office in Bloomington, Minnesota, a woman named Anna Marie came to see me and said she needed to

talk to me about a very personal, very important matter related to Social Security. When she came into my office she was noticeably upset and apprehensive about her situation. She sat down and explained to me that \$4,000 had been taken out of her retirement benefits and she desperately needed that money today. In fact, she needed the money for dentures, and if she did not get those new dentures she would be placed on a liquid diet, unable to eat solid food. The \$4,000 she had lost would help her afford these dentures and maintain the independence and life-style that she deserves.

When I told her about what Congress would hopefully do today, about the bill before us to remove the Social Security earnings limit, she started to cry. Her eyes welled up with tears, she clasped her hands together and she said, "Praise Jesus. Thank you, God."

Well, this is an important bill in the lives of real people, real seniors who need that \$4,000, who need the money that has been taken by the Federal Government. In voting for it, my colleagues, we help Anna Marie, we help many others like her across the country. In voting for it, to remove the Social Security earnings limit, we will make a real difference in the lives of real seniors, ensuring that not only can they keep the money they earn, that they need, but also the independence that these seniors deserve.

So I hope in a bipartisan way we overwhelmingly pass this legislation before us today.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I too rise in strong support of H.R. 5 today. This bill is a win-win situation, not just for seniors but for the country as a whole as well.

Clearly, it is to the great advantage of seniors to have the opportunity to continue to work, to bring in income and not have their Social Security cut.

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It is the right thing to do. Seniors, particularly between 65 and 70, still have a lot of bills and a lot of concerns that Social Security cannot meet. Allowing them to work is a way to help them make that up. But it is also a great benefit to our economy. If there is one thing I hear from every business in my district, it is that they cannot find enough workers. It does not matter what the job is; they cannot find enough people to do the jobs they need.

Well, we have a wealth of talent out there with great experience, and that is our seniors who can fill those jobs and help our economy. This bill is fair to seniors, excellent for the economy, and I recommend that we support it strongly.

I also think it is great that it is a bipartisan piece of legislation. It shows an example of where the House can work together to solve real problems for real people in this country, and I am very proud to support it.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), an esteemed member of the Committee on Ways and Means and a member of the Subcommittee on Social Security.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding me the time; and I want to thank him and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER) and other members of the Committee on Ways and Means who have put this legislation forward. I rise in very strong support of it, the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act, properly named, as well.

The gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. RAMSTAD) talked earlier about a constituent who had come into his office and talked about the penalty that she now lives under, which is about 4,000 a year, and does not enable her to do things she needs to do for herself.

Let me tell my colleagues another story. And there are so many out there. Each of us knows people in our districts, maybe in our family, who are affected by this. But Marjorie Thompson is a dear friend of mine back home. She is a caregiver. She is a nurse. She takes care of elderly patients primarily. She is a compassionate, a skilled person who has a very strong work ethic and wants to work.

Marjorie is in her late sixties, and she wants to go to work every day. She has come to me and she has said, Rob, should I work? And I have to tell her that her marginal tax rate for every additional dollar she earns now is about 80 percent. She is getting advice now from everybody she knows that say, of course she should not work, not with that kind of penalty.

If we could take away the earnings penalty from her, she would work and she would work a full year and she would not stop when she has reached that cap.

People like Marjorie Thompson are needed. They are needed to care for our elderly. They are needed throughout our economy. These are people that have a lot to contribute. And it is not just economically. They have a lot to contribute to our society. They want to work. They want to have the dignity and the self-respect that comes with work.

The last thing that this Congress and this Government should be doing is discouraging them from working. We have to remove this penalty from the Tax Code. It is overdue.

Again, I commend the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) and others, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) who put this forward. And I am really looking forward to its being enacted into law.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY).

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of repealing the earnings test for Social Security beneficiaries between the ages of 65 and 69.

There is currently a shortage of workers in the U.S. There is no good reason for Social Security to punish people who want to work. These more mature workers are some of our Nation's most skilled.

Mr. Speaker, the earnings limit is a relic of the Depression era. With Americans living longer, Social Security should not dictate their life-style choices to them. This bill is good social policy and good economic policy. It does not make sense to punish Americans for working when Congress is being lobbied to allow additional workers into the country from other countries.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we are approaching this in a bipartisan manner; and I hope that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle can use this year to address broader reform.

When discussions turn to handling the budget surplus, we must insist that the solvency of Social Security and Medicare are addressed first and that our older citizens have a prescription drug benefit. We should be addressing this now, not adjourning.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. KUYKENDALL).

Mr. KUYKENDALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this legislation. It is important legislation for our seniors.

Incredibly, seniors between the ages of 65 and 70 currently lose a dollar's worth of Social Security benefits for every \$3 earned over \$17,000. Seniors should not be penalized for working. It is just plain unconscionable that the Government would take away these hard-earned benefits.

With our powerful economic growth continuing, the need for skilled workers in the workforce is increasing. To have any disincentive to work is bad policy. More than 800,000 working senior citizens lose part or all of their Social Security benefits due to this obsolete provision. And today we can remove the earnings limit.

I am glad to hear also the President recognizes this unfairness in this earnings limit. Ending the earnings limit is good for seniors, good for the Nation; and it is the right thing to do. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SANCHEZ).

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 5, legislation to repeal the earnings test for Social Security for the ages 65 through 69. It is time to get rid of this penalty, and I am glad that we are finally debating this issue.

The earnings limit originated in the 1930s, but today people remain healthy and vigorous longer than they did then; and it makes sense to repeal this obsolete and punitive limit.

It makes no sense to penalize seniors, some who still have to work in the workplace, some who want to con-

tribute their skills to the workplace, especially in a time when businesses are finding it difficult to recruit enough qualified workers to fill the jobs that remain vacant.

The current system is a disincentive for seniors to continue to work, and it needs to be changed. And this legislation is long overdue.

But there are a lot of other things we also need to work on. We need to help retirees by using the surplus to extend Social Security and Medicare, to provide a prescription drug plan for all seniors, and to lift the limit on outside income for beneficiaries of Social Security.

I have supported raising the limit in the past, and I support repealing it today.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. CRANE) a respected member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman for yielding to me this time.

I want to say to my colleagues that all of us understand the meaning of the phrase "an honest day's pay for an honest day's work."

Because of the many, many decades of hard work in all kinds of jobs, our older Americans appreciate that adage more than most. They know what it means to expend a lifetime of dealing with the uncertainties of living paycheck to paycheck. They got up early every morning, went to the assembly line, the office, the shop, and came home at night to enjoy some time with family and friends.

When they were rearing their families, they simply hoped to make life a little better for their children; and when they reached retirement age, they hoped to collect the money they contributed to Social Security and a pension. But if they continue to work after 65, they are forced to watch the Federal Government continue to try to squeeze every cent it can from their paycheck; and to add insult to injury, even their Social Security is affected until they turn 70.

So I proudly stand before my colleagues today because, after decades of trying to eliminate the Social Security earnings limit, it is finally happening on the floor of the House today. This means that the over 42,000 seniors living in my district, many of whom continue working beyond the average retirement age, will be getting a little bit of a break.

On behalf of my 8th District constituents, I want to thank and commend my colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON), for his persistence in getting H.R. 5 to the floor for a vote. I want to commend the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER), our chairman, who was pioneering in this effort years ago. And I want to commend the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW), our distinguished chairman of the subcommittee, for all of his

efforts. And I commend all of our colleagues, on a bipartisan basis, for joining as cosponsors of a bill that my colleagues, I know, will want to unanimously support and eliminate this obscene tax.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. CLEMENT).

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today that H.R. 5 is moving.

I have been in Congress for several years now, and this is a piece of legislation that I have felt like should have been passed many years ago. And I know senior citizens that have quit work simply because the penalty was too high.

Now they will be able, after this legislation passes the House and Senate and signed by the President, and I expect it all to happen this year and very soon now, where senior citizens will have an opportunity to make some decisions and whereby they can have some structure in their lives, where they can have some peace of mind, knowing that if they want to continue to work, and many of them want to do that, they will be able to accomplish those goals and objectives for themselves and their families.

It is estimated that, under current law, about 4 percent of Social Security recipients will exceed the \$17,000 earnings limit and will have the benefits reduced by an average of \$8,154. That does not have to happen now with this legislation.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT).

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the gentleman from Texas (Chairman ARCHER) and the gentleman from Florida (Chairman SHAW) and in support of the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act.

The Members of this body have different philosophies about the role of government. Some want an expansive, activist government. Others, like myself, believe that government should have a much more limited role. But I think everyone agrees that the Government should not discourage hard work and self-sufficiency. Unfortunately, we do just that. And nowhere is this more evident than with the so-called Social Security earnings limit.

Incredibly, more than 800,000 working seniors between the ages of 65 and 69 lose part or all of their Social Security benefits simply because they choose to work in their golden years. This is wrong.

No matter what the rationale for the earnings limit was during the Great Depression, this is the year 2000. We should not stand for a Tax Code that penalizes hard work and responsibility.

I urge all my colleagues to support the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HINOJOSA).

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I want to say how glad I am that today we have an opportunity to vote to repeal the earnings test for Social Security beneficiaries between the ages of 65 and 69. This action is long overdue.

The earnings limit originated in the 1930s when the Social Security program was started during the Depression, and it remains despite the vast changes in the economy and the lives of senior citizens that have taken place over the last 60 years.

It makes no sense to penalize seniors for participating in the workplace, especially at a time when businesses cannot find enough qualified workers to fill jobs that remain vacant. People remain healthy and vigorous longer than they did in the 1930s. So it makes perfect sense to repeal this obsolete and punitive limit.

By passing this bill, seniors who need or want to work can now do so without the fear of being punished by an outdated law.

I am glad that today we, both sides of the aisle, can all be on the same page and finally take this action. Let us vote "yes" to pass H.R. 5.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. MINGE).

Mr. MINGE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from California for yielding the time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I join in the parade of Members who support this legislation. Previously, this proposal to lift the earnings limit has been used as a partisan Trojan horse. It included tax cuts that were controversial, and it would have required raiding the Social Security trust fund.

Today we have a balanced budget, we are not engaged in a raid on the Social Security trust fund, and we can approve this proposal on its merits. It is not a Trojan horse. It is not accompanied by other controversial Internal Revenue Code changes.

Strong policy considerations support this legislation. They have been amply stated by previous speakers. I would just like to say them briefly: fairness to seniors who wish to work. We should encourage a work ethics. Two, it is budget neutral. This proposal does not cost money. Three, we have a labor shortage. We need additional workers in America.

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I am pleased to join in supporting this legislation.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WU).

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a cosponsor of H.R. 5, the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act. Under current law, seniors who earn more than \$17,000 per year are penalized \$1 for every \$3 of additional earnings. This is wrong. We should not penalize hard work. It makes no sense to penalize seniors who are participating in our work force, especially at a time when

we cannot find enough workers to fill a burgeoning economy.

I have heard from many small businesses in my district that are very excited about the possibility of hiring additional workers, workers who have solid work values, who are responsible, experienced and eager to fill the positions which are currently available.

As we vote on this important bipartisan legislation today, I want to encourage my colleagues to continue work in assisting our seniors to retire so they are not forced to work. However, I strongly believe that those who choose to work should not be penalized. And this bill solves that.

I urge my colleagues to support this long-needed legislation.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), the ranking Democrat on the Committee on Agriculture.

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

Mr. STENHOLM. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation and encourage all of my colleagues to support it. I have been a strong supporter of legislation to repeal the earnings limit for several years. In fact, repeal of the earnings limit was part of the comprehensive Social Security reform package that I introduced, along with the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE) in 1998.

Our legislation though contained several other provisions that rewarded individuals who continued to work after retirement age. While I am disappointed that Congress is not acting on the other parts of our proposal to strengthen Social Security, I am very pleased that this part of our legislation is going to be enacted today.

Senior citizens are some of our most valued workers, contributing a wealth of experience that can be gained only through years of dedicated service. For this reason, I agree wholeheartedly with the statement of former Senator Bentsen that discouraging seniors citizen from working is "like keeping your best hitters on the bench."

Our society should not overlook the contribution of our seniors. Unfortunately, press reports suggest that some in the Republican party intend to use this vote on the earnings limit for partisan political purposes. I would ask a reconsideration of those who choose to do that.

As Democrats who have worked in a bipartisan way on comprehensive Social Security reform, I am extremely disappointed by these reports and hope that the Republican leadership will repudiate these tactics. The suggestions that Democrats have opposed repeal of the Social Security earnings limit are completely false.

Democrats have supported repeal of the Social Security earnings limit as part of a comprehensive legislation that keeps Social Security strong for those currently retired or close to it, and everyone knows that.

In fact, the reported line of criticism being suggested by some actually raises questions about their commitment to the integrity of the Social Security trust fund. The votes being cited to criticize Democrats were on bills that would have raided the Social Security surplus to fund tax cuts, in which repeal of the earnings limit was one small part.

Seniors will not be fooled by a political effort to use the issue of repealing the Social Security earnings limit to advocate a tax cut that would have been funded by raiding the Social Security surplus.

The past votes that some Republicans seek to exploit for political purposes were on bills that would have threatened the integrity of the Social Security trust fund. The \$80 billion tax cut considered by the House in the fall of 1998 that included repeal of the Social Security earnings limit would have been funded entirely out of the Social Security surplus.

The Republican leadership at that time did not even allow a vote on the Stenholm-Neumann amendment, which provided that the tax cuts could not be funded with a Social Security surplus. Likewise, the tax bill considered by the House last year would have dipped into the Social Security surplus by more than \$70 billion and would have exploded in costs at the same time the Social Security system is projected to begin running shortfalls.

Let us use today to set aside the bipartisanship. Let us recognize that today we are reaching out in a bipartisan way in order to do what everyone has agreed. While I am critical of the fact we are not doing more, we accept this today, let us put the partisanship aside. Let us continue to reach out for a long-term solution for Social Security.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. DUNN), a respected member of the committee.

Ms. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the seniors and near seniors in the Congressional district that I represent, I rise today in enthusiastic support of H.R. 5, the Seniors Citizens' Freedom to Work Act.

The Social Security earnings limit is another aspect of a 60-year old Social Security system that no longer applies to modern society. These days seniors are living longer. They are healthier, and yet too many of our Nation's best workers are sitting in rocking chairs.

We need their strength. We need their experience in our communities. And young people starting new jobs need their example, their example of the value of work and the discipline of work. Unfortunately, by denying retirement benefits for those who choose to work, Social Security penalizes seniors who want to be productive and teach the values of hard work to younger generations.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is also very important to women who, 75 percent of

the time, live longer than their spouses. And they ought to be able to have the peace of mind that they can supplement their retirement earnings if they wish without being penalized.

In Washington State alone, more than 13,000 seniors have been forced to choose between keeping the job they love or losing the retirement income for which they worked all their lives. This is wrong. It also keeps an intelligent and productive part of our work force at home.

Seniors who are currently retired have been called the greatest generation, for the sacrifices they made in defending freedom and building America into the world's only remaining superpower. It is time that we honor the contributions to America, their contributions, by allowing them to work, if they wish, and to give one of the most precious gifts of all, that they can offer their work ethic.

I want to congratulate the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) for persevering in this cause. I want to urge my colleagues to support this bill and the President to sign it.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), the Democratic leader.

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

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, today we are taking the first step towards strengthening retirement security for all seniors and moving closer to putting Social Security on a firmer footing for the rest of the century. This time, we are doing it in a fiscally responsible way.

I am gratified that Republicans are joining with us to repeal the earnings test for Social Security. This is truly a bipartisan effort. Democrats have overwhelmingly voted three times in recent years to raise the limit and President Clinton has requested repealing this earnings limit in his last two budgets. The sooner we send this to his desk, the faster we will be able to deliver this relief to seniors who want to continue making a real contribution to our society and our economy.

Unlike a Republican attempt to raise the limit in 1998, the bill we debate today does not hurt the long-term solvency of Social Security to do so. This reform is long overdue. It is about time that we stand up for America's seniors.

According to Federal Reserve Chairman Greenspan, we are beginning to suffer from a serious worker shortage that threatens our economic expansion. This bill will play a major role in protecting our economic gains of the last 7 years. It will not only help raise the standard of living for many of our seniors but it will also help us keep the strongest economic growth of our lifetime on track by keeping a generation of skilled workers in the economy.

I met with a number of small business owners in South County St. Louis

in my district this past weekend and they talked about their need to hire workers over the age of 65 because they are having such trouble finding skilled workers for jobs that are available right now. This bill will encourage seniors to return to the workplace and enable business owners to fill vacant jobs.

This earnings limit is a relic of the great depression when we experienced double-digit unemployment among young people. The limit does not make any sense in the year 2000. It needs to be relegated to the dustbin of economic history. This is just the first step towards strengthening retirement security for all seniors. Now it is time to take the next step, using the surplus to extend the life of Social Security and Medicare.

Today, we are voting to allow working seniors to fully enjoy their Social Security benefit, but that very benefit will be in danger if Republicans do not join with Democrats to take immediate action to strengthen the Social Security trust fund with an infusion of financial support.

I hope my Republican colleagues will join us over the next several months in using the surplus to strengthen both Social Security and Medicare. This bill shows that Democrats and Republicans can work together to rebuild and build retirement security. I hope that we can build on this foundation and work together to put Social Security and Medicare on a sound financial footing well into the next century.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN).

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

Mr. GILMAN. I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act. This bill is simple and straightforward, removing the earnings limit for working seniors receiving Social Security. Seniors aged 65 to 69 who have chosen to continue to work have had their Social Security benefits reduced by \$1 for every \$3 earned when their total earnings went over \$17,000 annually.

The 104th Congress made a long needed change, raising the annual earnings limit to \$30,000 by the year 2002. More needed to be done on this issue. Ever since coming to Washington in the 93rd Congress, I have introduced legislation to either raise the earnings limit or eliminate it altogether. These earnings limits have discouraged seniors from working and diminished their potential productivity, conveying a message that seniors have nothing to contribute and are better off not working in the workforce. It is gratifying that the President has stated his support for the elimination of the earnings limit, and I commend the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) for their attention to this important issue.

Accordingly, I urge our colleagues to join in supporting this timely, important senior legislation.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. LUCAS).

(Mr. LUCAS of Kentucky asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LUCAS of Kentucky. I thank the distinguished gentleman from California for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5, the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act. The elimination of the Social Security earnings limit is a reform that is long overdue.

Under the current system, senior citizens are forced to choose between the loss of their Social Security benefits and dropping out of the workforce. What a terrible message to send to our seniors that their work is not valued. With their wealth of information and experience, senior citizens are a truly vital part of the stability of our workforce and the development of the workforce of tomorrow.

The current limit takes away the benefits from those who have rightfully earned them through a lifetime of hard work. We should not be punishing our senior citizens for continuing to work but, rather, encouraging them. That is just common sense.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH).

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

Mr. RUSH. I want to thank the gentleman from California for yielding me this time, and I want to commend him for his leadership on this very, very important piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5, the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act. This Social Security earnings limit is wrong and archaic. Why penalize able-bodied senior Americans who can work? At a time when our economy is in need of an experienced workforce, we should not be turning our backs on seniors who have valuable experience and skills.

The worst part of the earnings limit is that it penalizes poor senior citizens. Mr. Speaker, not every senior who retires has private pensions to supplement their Social Security benefits.

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Health costs are rising; prescription drugs are unattainable. Seniors need to work to supplement their Social Security benefits. No longer should we force seniors to choose between food and medicine. Do not deny our seniors their basic rights. We must do away with this archaic earnings limit which deprives our seniors of their earned benefits.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE)

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5. I came to this Congress recently following in the great footsteps of my colleague, the gentleman from Sacramento, California (Mr. MATSUI), and I want to specifically applaud the fact that after 40 years of Democratic majority here and 6 years of Republican majority, we finally have been able to move a bill out of the House, hopefully on to the Senate, and then to the President for signature.

This particular issue, where we in effect tax the ability of our seniors to contribute to our workforce disproportionately, has needed to be changed since it was first passed in the Depression. There is no argument about that. There is no getting around that fact.

Again, we spent 40 years under the tutelage of one party, and now 6 years we have been at it here. We finally have agreement, and I am happy to be part of this. This is one of the things I campaigned on, to try and get this tax off the backs of our seniors. I welcome my friends on the other side to this. I am very, very pleased to be here with the gentleman from California (Mr. MATSUI) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) in this effort.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY).

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

Mr. Speaker, I would echo the comments just made by my friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE). It is fun for a change to participate in a debate on a bill that enjoys broad bipartisan support, improving the Social Security program that we have for our seniors.

It is time we lift the earnings limit. We need to do this as part of a multifaceted approach at improving income in retirement years. This approach needs to include other activity by this Congress, activity where hopefully we would come together also in a bipartisan way to strengthen Social Security, making certain that it is going to be there for the long run, and coming together in a bipartisan way to help additional employers offer retirement savings opportunities for their workplace. Presently, only half the workers have retirement savings at work. We need to do better, and there are strategies introduced and supported by Members of both parties to get this done as well.

Finally, we need to come together to add additional savings incentives, targeted specifically at middle-income and lower-income households, so that they might save for retirement.

But back to today's bill. Today's bill really is for those that hit retirement years without enough savings already accrued. Those years, 65 to 70, represent an important last opportunity to get some additional income, even while the Social Security checks start coming, so that they might build that nest egg, to meet their needs, to keep them comfortable as they go on.

Do you know that today someone reaching the age of 65 has an additional 15 years of life expectancy if they are a male, and 19 years if they are a female? Surely there are substantial needs for a retirement nest egg in light of that kind of life-span opportunity. In addition, we know that people reaching the age of 65 today are healthier, more engaged and want to work than ever before; and we ought to give them that opportunity.

Additionally, we know that in light of our strong economy, the needs in the workforce are intense, and this potential source of labor can help employer after employer, right across the country.

In my own State, the State of North Dakota, people over the age of 60 represent 18 percent of our population. Clearly we need their participation. That is important today, but it is only going to grow more important, because this over-60 segment will swell by 60 percent in North Dakota by the year 2025. Quite frankly, I do not know how we will keep our schools going. I do not know how we will keep some of the businesses going if we do not have workers in this age span, 65 to 70, participating if they want to in the workforce without the absolutely ruinous penalty presented by the tax on earnings today.

For every reason I have mentioned, I urge a unanimous vote on this. What a pleasure it is to have this bipartisan achievement.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN).

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

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, today this House of Representatives will take a real step toward tax reform for America's working retirees. By repealing the so-called Social Security earnings test, we are doing away with an outdated law that affects over 800,000 seniors who have been denied the needed income to survive in their golden years.

Created in the Depression to encourage older workers to move out of the job market, the earnings limit is an antiquated solution to a problem that no longer exists. Many of today's seniors want to take part in this economic boom, but are penalized \$1 in Social Security benefits for every \$3 they earn beyond \$17,000. My State of California is hit hardest by the earnings test, affecting over 161,000 seniors. When seniors are denied the opportunity to work and governments are denied income taxes generated by seniors working, we all lose.

Mr. Speaker, I have long believed the outright repeal of this law was the right thing to do, and I am pleased to have an opportunity today to be part of the team that will send the bill to the Senate and the President that lowers the tax burden for so many working retirees.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR), the Democratic whip.

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, first of all let me congratulate my two friends, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MATSUI), for their fine work in bringing this forward today.

Mr. Speaker, today we have the chance to take action to repeal the Social Security earnings limit, a law so outdated few can remember how it ever got on the books.

What is the Social Security earnings limit? Well, ask any senior and they will tell you the earning limit is a Catch-22 of the Social Security system. It is a law that actually punishes older people for working. In fact, it forces them, literally forces them, to become more dependent on Social Security than they need to be.

Now, why would anybody want a law like that? Well, Mr. Speaker, I do not know any of us who want a law like that, and it is time for a change. That is why we are repealing it today.

Our message for every American, no matter how old, ought to be that if you want a job and you are able to do a job, by God, this government is never going to try to stop you from getting a job.

We are voting to repeal the earnings limit because in this incredible economy, there is more than enough work that needs to be done, and older Americans may be just some of the people who can do it and do it well in a labor market that is struggling for good, competent, qualified people.

We are voting to repeal the earnings limit not only because we believe older people ought to have the right to earn higher incomes, but because they deserve the opportunity to live richer lives, lives made better by the opportunity to join the world of work. But, Mr. Speaker, the truth is that it is not just seniors who win if we repeal this foolish law; we all win. We all win because this Nation needs the experience, the skill and the maturity of older people that they can bring to the American workplace.

Older Americans today are one of this Nation's greatest resources. It is high time we take advantage of it. This is a win-win proposition for America.

Again, I want to congratulate my colleagues for bringing this to the floor.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS).

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

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, back in the 1930s the reason for starting the earnings test the Democrats said it was necessary to allow younger workers to work. Today what we have is a shortage of qualified and experienced workers, so it is very

appropriate that we are getting around to enacting this legislation.

I might point out I am glad to see the minority party supports this piece of legislation. For almost 4 decades the Democratic party did not seem to want to initiate and to pass this legislation; and the chairman here, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW), and others on this side, worked so hard to try and pass this. So this is a great day, to see the folks on the other side of the aisle say let's pass it by unanimous agreement.

There is no good reason, of course. There is no longer a reason for this antiquated law to be on the books. It is discriminatory.

So I support the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act. I am an original cosponsor of it. It is a law we have to be very joyful this afternoon for, because it is a law that is needed.

Mr. Speaker, since the Social Security program was created in 1935, it has always included an earnings test. There have been many efforts through the years to eliminate the earnings test, but none were successful.

Back in the 1930's the reason given for starting the earnings test was to "open up jobs" for younger workers. What we are currently experiencing is a shortage of qualified and experienced workers. The time to act is now.

In 1996 I voted to increase the earnings limit for seniors who chose to continue working. We were able to increase the earnings limit for those aged 65-69 to \$30,000 by the year 2002. At the time this legislation was passed, a working senior who reached \$11,280 in earned income lost \$1 in Social Security for each \$3 earned thereafter. That's a marginal tax rate of 33%! That's a high price to pay for merely wanting to work.

Let's take a look at how the current law affects our nation's seniors who are receiving Social Security benefits and also working. This year beneficiaries aged 65-69 can earn up to \$17,000 without being penalized. They lose one dollar for every three of earnings that exceed this limit.

Beneficiaries aged 62-64, those individuals who retire early, are allowed to earn up to \$10,080 this year without a penalty. They lose one dollar of Social Security benefits for every two dollars they earn above the imposed limit. While the measure we passed in 1996 made vast improvements to the earnings test, our real goal at that time was to repeal the law outright. I believe that we will be successful this time around.

What's wrong with giving elderly workers who either want to work or must work in order to maintain a decent lifestyle the ability to do so. I am proud to be a cosponsor of H.R. 5 that would repeal the Social Security earnings test entirely. I have long been a proponent of repealing this outdated provision and shall continue to support such proposals until we succeed in changing this law.

The earnings test limit is unjust. It treats Social Security benefits less like a pension and more like welfare. It represents a Social Security bias in favor of unearned income over earned income.

It is effectively a mandatory retirement mechanism our country no longer accepts or needs. It precludes greater flexibility for the el-

derly worker and also prevents America's full use of eager, experienced and educated elderly workers. Finally, it deprives the U.S. Economy of the additional income tax which would be generated by the elderly workers.

There is no good reason to keep this antiquated and discriminatory law in existence any longer. I support swift passage of the Senior Citizen's Freedom to Work Act and call upon my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote for this very important and long overdue change in the law.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS).

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today and join my colleagues in strong support of this legislation, and I commend the leadership of this House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MATSUI). It is a good day when we can be so united in a bipartisan way to end an unfair tax on our working seniors.

Mr. Speaker, many seniors work because they need to. They should not be penalized for trying to put food on their table. They should be supported. Seniors in my district have been telling me this is something that they need. Some seniors work because they want to. They should not be penalized for remaining active and involved. These seniors should be supported as well. Our country is the richer for it.

It is time to act in this way. Today we will have, I hope, unanimous support to remove this onerous burden on working seniors and end the earnings limit. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY).

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

Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago this House voted to right a wrong. Most of us agree it is unfair for a married couple to be penalized by the Federal Government just simply because they are married, so we passed legislation to fix that unfairness. Today it is time to fix another long-standing unfairness, the Social Security earnings limit.

Mr. Speaker, it is about time. For too long we have penalized our most experienced workers, created disincentives for them to work, oftentimes when their employers need their expertise the most. No American should be penalized for their desire to work and contribute to the economy and strength of our country, least of all our seniors.

In 1987, my class in Congress, the Republican members of my class, voted to take this on as a project, to try to eliminate the earnings limit. We met with Dan Rostenkowski. I think it was the only time he ever spoke to me, but we met with Dan Rostenkowski, and he said, "No, we won't do it." So over the years we have picked away at it with the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER) and various ones, and with their

help picked away at it and made it better. But today is a chance to get rid of it.

For the sake of simple fairness, it is time for this body to eliminate the earnings limit. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT).

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

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, Dan Rostenkowski would not do it. He is a Democrat. I am embarrassed by it.

I want to commend the gentleman from Texas (Chairman ARCHER) and the gentleman from Florida (Chairman SHAW). I want to commend the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MATSUI).

But, Mr. Speaker, this is not enough. Everybody is reaching into that Social Security trust fund and they are raiding it. I have a bill and it calls for a constitutional amendment, and it says you cannot touch the Social Security trust fund. It can only be used for Social Security and Medicare. If we pass that, we would have enough money to provide health insurance for every American.

But I want to pay tribute to the Republican Party today. Rostenkowski did not do it, Rostenkowski would not do it, and the gentleman from Texas (Chairman ARCHER) and the gentleman from Florida (Chairman SHAW) did it. But the gentleman from California (Mr. MATSUI) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) deserve a lot of credit for making it happen as well.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

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Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

I would like to add my applause and appreciation to the gentleman from Texas (Chairman ARCHER) and the ranking member, the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), to the gentleman from Florida (Chairman SHAW), and the ranking member, the gentleman from California (Mr. MATSUI), for their vision.

This bill spells relief. I have spent some time with seniors, most of us do as we visit our senior citizen centers, as we work with seniors in our respective religious communities, as we work with seniors as our neighbors.

I can actually say that the retirement earnings test keeps good talent away from the job market. This legislation will allow thousands of social security recipients to work without a reduction in their benefits, to work in child care, to work in volunteer programs, after-school programs.

In fact, as I visited the Latino Learning Center and their Senior Citizen Center, they were making crafts. Al-

though that is not employment per se, it still might have impacted their income by way of the income being attributable to each individual from the crafts that they made.

The repealing of this will in fact increase work incentives; will put good, strong, valued seniors in the workplace, and will add to the value of what they have already given to the workplace and this Nation. Repealing the RET will not affect social security's finances over the long run, and in particular, repealing the RET will make the social security program easier and less expensive to administer.

This is long overdue. As I have said when I have come to the floor before, this spells relief. It is relief for seniors, for the social security program, for the community where these valuable seniors can be out and about in the work force contributing to this Nation as they have done in the past.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as I may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY).

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

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I stand in strong support of this legislation. It is a bill we have worked on for many years.

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

Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. I just again would like to thank Members for the bipartisan atmosphere that occurs on the floor of the House, as it did in subcommittee and in the full committee. The fact that we have moved this bill in an expedited fashion certainly means that we should get it to the President in a timely fashion so that it will become law in the year 2000. Again, this is a much needed change in the social security system.

I might just add, just so there is no misunderstanding, that this will have a \$23 billion revenue loss out of the social security system over the next 10 years. But over the life of the social security system itself, because of the delayed credit, it will have no impact on the solvency of the social security system, so this has no impact on the social security system nor on the Medicare system.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), the distinguished ranking Democrat on the Committee on Ways and Means.

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

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. MATSUI) for the way he has handled this, not only on the floor, but certainly, as the ranking member of the subcommittee on social security.

It gives me an opportunity to once again congratulate my long and dear friend, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW), who showed an interest in

social security generally, and this type of cooperation between our parties still gives me some ray of hope, no matter how small that glimmer may be, as we move forward on our political calendar, that there are many other things that we can accomplish in working together.

For those people who believe that it is in our best interest to have confrontation and do nothing, I suggest that at the polling places, both Democrats and Republicans may suffer. It seems to me that there have been enough suggestions made by the President that Republicans can pick and choose those that they feel comfortable with, those that they think are in the best interests of the people of this great country, and to be able to work with us to do it.

This is a classic example of the leadership of the chairman and the subcommittee chairman, in working with us so that we can get things done. I laud the Members for this effort, and I look forward to working with them on other issues that remain within the budget, as this has, that do not invite and encourage a veto, but those things that we know that we can work out our differences on, not only on both sides of the aisle but also on Pennsylvania Avenue.

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

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of the time.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make an observation which I think is something that all of us have sort of made reference to, but not particularly in this regard. Some who are looking on today, tuning in on C-Span, probably think they have the wrong channel.

This has been, I think, a real landmark in what we can accomplish in this Congress by working together.

My good friend, the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), and we use that phrase a little flip around here, because when we refer to someone as our good friend, that is about the time we are about to drop a hammer on them, but we are good friends. We are very good friends. We have been for many years, as I am with the gentleman from California (Mr. MATSUI).

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER) I think has been an incredible chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, and we have brought things together that have made a real difference, and we do come together on things that we can politically agree upon.

There should be no disagreement in this country, no disagreement, that people who work their entire working lives, when they reach retirement age, just simply because they have to work beyond that or just simply want to work beyond that, that they should not be penalized. We agree on that. We ought to constantly look out and reach out for things that we agree upon, because it is so important to such an important segment of our population. It is so important.

So this bill is going to pass. I am going to ask for a recorded vote, because I want all the Members to have the opportunity to step forward on the Democrat and the Republican side and cast their vote, a recorded vote, to say they are in favor of American seniors. They are working with us, and we are working together to make a better life for the senior citizens of the country.

This bill takes effect on January 1 of the year 2000. That means exactly 2 months ago this bill comes into effect. The senior citizens of this country will enjoy the fruits and labor of what we have started here today.

I am pleased to say that the President is with us. Yesterday, while we were marking this bill up in the Committee on Ways and Means, the President was in Miami Beach doing a fundraiser for my opponent at a cocktail party. In fact, I thought it was rather ironic, because it was taking place at the exact time we were voting on this bill.

That is the way the system works. There is nothing wrong with that. There is nothing wrong with Democrat presidents supporting Democrat candidates and Republican presidents supporting Republican candidates.

I will tell the Members that I would certainly guess, and as tradition has it, just as we did in welfare reform and other pieces of meaningful legislation that has come out of this Congress, that the President will invite the Republicans down to take part in the bill's signing. That is the way it should be.

So many people here can take credit for what is going on here today. I am very pleased and proud that it happens during the Republican majority, but we have come together. We have locked away the social security surplus so we are no longer spending it. This makes America's great pension program available for the seniors without penalty.

This is a wonderful thing that has happened. This country has gone through a great transition, and when it comes to working together to make things happen, the best of us comes out when we work together.

I want to publicly thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MATSUI), and of course, my chairman, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER), and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON) for the work that they did in bringing this thing together. This is truly a bipartisan effort. It is truly in the best tradition of the American democracy.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to offer my support to the Senior Citizens Freedom to Work Act (H.R. 5), which repeals the Social Security "earnings limitations." During a time when an increasing number of senior citizens are able to enjoy productive lives well past retirement age and businesses are in desperate need of experienced workers, it makes no sense to punish seniors for working. Yet the federal government does just that by

deducting a portion of seniors' monthly Social Security check should they continue to work and earn income above an arbitrary government-set level.

When the government takes money every month from people's paychecks for the Social Security Trust Fund, it promises retirees that the money will be there for them when they retire. The government should keep that promise and not reduce benefits simply because a senior chooses to work.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, by providing a disincentive to remaining in the workforce, the earnings limitation deprives the American economy of the benefits of senior citizens who wish to continue working but are discouraged from doing so by fear of losing part of their Social Security benefits. The federal government should not discourage any citizen from seeking or holding productive employment.

The underlying issue of the earnings limitation goes back to the fact that money from the trust fund is routinely spent for things other than paying pensions to beneficiaries. This is why the first bill I introduced in the 106th Congress was the Social Security Preservation Act (H.R. 219), which forbids Congress from spending Social Security funds on anything other than paying Social Security pensions.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I wish to reiterate my strong support for the Senior Citizens Freedom to Work Act. Repealing the "earnings limitation" will help ensure that America's seniors can continue to enjoy fulfilling and productive lives in their "golden years." I also urge my colleagues to protect the integrity of the Social Security Trust Fund by cosponsoring the Social Security Preservation Act (H.R. 219).

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I want to express my strong support for H.R. 5, The Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act of 1999. This long overdue measure would allow persons aged 65 through 69 to continue working without losing some of their Social Security benefits.

Today, our seniors are more healthy and vigorous than ever. Many seniors who choose to continue to work find that working greatly enhances their retirement years. They are living longer and often finding that they either need or want to work well beyond traditional retirement age. Further, the time has come to stop penalizing seniors who need to keep working to supplement their Social Security incomes.

This legislation, which I cosponsored, would do away with this antiquated and obsolete punitive limit to Social Security payments. Under current law, senior citizens in this age group lose \$1 in Social Security benefits for every \$3 they earn each year above a certain level, which is \$17,000 this year. The earnings test was designed during the Great Depression to encourage older workers to leave the workforce to create more jobs for younger workers. Today, we are experiencing a labor shortage, not a surplus. With our economy's emphasis on increased productivity, older workers have the years of experience and work ethic that are in great demand.

It is estimated that initially about 600,000 seniors would be affected by the elimination of the earnings test. According to the Social Security Administration, H.R. 5 will increase Social Security outlays by \$17 billion over 5 years and \$26 billion over 10 years. However, in the long term, the measure's cost would be

negligible because of offsetting effects because retirees would no longer receive delayed retirement credits, which under current law compensate for the benefits lost to the earnings test applied to workers above the full retirement age, and the savings from this would offset the cost from eliminating the earnings test.

Lifting the limit on outside income for beneficiaries of retirement security is a key component of my initiatives to extend the life of Social Security and Medicare. H.R. 5 is crucial as part of a broader plan that uses the opportunity of a surplus to extend the life of Social Security and Medicare and pay down the debt.

In 1998, the Republican leadership brought an increase in the earnings limit to the floor attached to a tax bill that would have been financed by borrowing directly from the Social Security Trust Fund. I opposed this bill funded by the Social Security surplus, and supported an alternative that provided for an increase in the Social Security earnings limit identical to the one in the Republican bill, but not from the Social Security surplus. Unfortunately, the bill failed to be enacted.

H.R. 5 builds upon a bipartisan measure enacted in 1996 which I supported, the Senior Citizens' Right to Work Act (H.R. 3136), which provided for increases in the amounts of allowable earnings under the Social Security earnings limit for individuals who have attained retirement age. Now we are going a step further and eliminating the cap altogether. This is the right policy at the right time.

The earnings test is a relic of the Great Depression and the time has come to terminate it. The test is a severe disincentive for older people to work. Not only do older workers suffer a reduction in their standard of living because of the test, the nation's economy loses valuable experience and skills as well.

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5, the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act.

This important legislation is long overdue. The earnings limit is a relic of an era when America was in a state of extreme economic despair. Mr. Speaker, today we are experiencing unprecedented prosperity. Our economy is booming. Our unemployment rate is lower than it has been in 30 years. It just doesn't make sense to discourage our nation's seniors from continuing to contribute to our economy by reducing their Social Security benefits.

Many of the seniors in my home state of Illinois continue to contribute to their communities through hard work. Repealing the earnings limit will have a very real impact on these seniors. Instead of being punished for their participation in the workforce, seniors should be encouraged to remain working. Eliminating the earnings test makes sense. It will be good for our seniors and good for our economy. And most importantly, we can do it without jeopardizing the future of Social Security. It is something that all of us, on both sides of the aisle, should be able to agree on.

But, once again, Republicans are playing politics with the issues that affect our nation's seniors the most. They are clamoring to point fingers at Democrats who have long been in support of amending the archaic earnings limit. But our nation's seniors cannot be fooled. Democrats support repealing the earnings limit while protecting the integrity of Social Security.

In the 105th Congress, the Republicans brought an increase of the earning limits to the floor but attached it to a risky tax cut package that would have put Social Security in severe jeopardy. Democrats strongly opposed that bill and offered a measure to raise the earnings limit and make the remaining tax cuts contingent on protecting the solvency of Social Security. This Democratic alternative was a responsible tax cut package that did not raid the Social Security Trust Fund. Not one Republican voted for this measure. This is just one of many cases that demonstrates who is on the side of seniors in this fight.

We must stop the finger pointing and come together to protect Social Security for generations to come. This is not the time for politics as usual. The livelihood of our nation's senior citizens is at stake.

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 5, the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act of 2000.

Under current law, over 8,000 Kansas seniors lose some or all of their Social Security benefits due to the Social Security earnings limit because they choose to continue to work. Seniors aged 65 to 69 have \$1 of their benefits reduced for every \$3 they earn over the current earnings limit of \$17,000. Simply, current law penalizes seniors for working. I do not believe it is fair to punish those seniors who want or need to participate in the workforce by having this disincentive to work.

Eliminating the earnings limit is not only fair for working seniors, it will improve the quality and efficiency of Social Security since the program will be easier and less expensive to administer. Furthermore, repealing the Social Security earnings limit is fiscally responsible. While the bill would increase Social Security spending by \$22.7 billion over the next 10 years, the resulting lower long-term benefit payments will more than offset the costs.

Mr. Speaker, by allowing seniors who want to work to retain their benefits, Congress will take an important step towards strengthening retirement security for all seniors. This step, however, should not be our last. I urge my colleagues to begin working with me, in the same bipartisan manner that we worked on today's bill, to put Social Security on a firm financial footing for future generations. We need to build on today's success by dedicating a substantial portion of the budget surplus to pay down debt and strengthen Social Security and Medicare.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5 and to join me in the larger challenge of strengthening Social Security and Medicare for our seniors and for generations of future retirees.

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, today, we take an important step forward in addressing a Social Security inequity that is an injustice to working seniors. Under the Social Security Earnings Limit, beneficiaries aged 65–69 can earn up to \$17,000 a year—but for every \$3 earned over this amount \$1 of benefits is lost.

The cap has always been one of the most unpopular parts of the Social Security program—and for good reason. It penalizes older people for working—and deprives the nation of the talent of working seniors. It's time to get rid of it, once and for all.

The earnings cap is a relic of the Great Depression, when concern over massive joblessness led to a perception that retirees should be discouraged from rejoining the workforce. Today, people are living longer and working

longer—and are as entitled as the rest of us to fair wages for their labor.

At a time when unemployment is at a 30-year low and we face acute labor shortages, this Depression-era work disincentive for seniors no longer makes sense.

Older Americans possess enormous talent and experience. It boggles the mind why we'd want to maintain disincentives for them to work. The earnings test not only erodes seniors' standards of living, but also costs the nation valuable skills in the workforce, as well as tax revenue generated by this income.

Retirees who receive income from other sources such as pensions or capital gains do not have any benefits reduced. Why should income from pensions or investments be treated more favorably than earned income?

I received a letter last summer from a retiree from my home town—Quincy, Massachusetts. He wrote: "I would like to retire with dignity and only want what I deserve. I feel that with your support of this bill, it would enable me to live without worries of finances and diminish the concerns of my family."

That is what this legislation is all about—simply giving seniors what they deserve.

While this is a step in the right direction, seniors deserve more—and we could and should be doing more—much more.

During Committee deliberations on this legislation last night, an amendment was offered to restore some of the benefits that are reduced due to the Government Pension Offset. This provision would have made widow's benefits more fair, and helped reduce the high rates of poverty that especially face elderly women.

Unfortunately, the Chairman passed on this opportunity—even though the Social Security Administration stated that the costs of adding this provision would be negligible.

Mr. Speaker, removing the earnings limit is progress—but is this all that we are going to do for seniors this year?

Are we going to address other inequities in the Social Security system—like the government pension offset, windfall reductions, dual entitlement provisions—or even the long-term solvency of the program?

Will we finally reauthorize the Older American Act?

Will we enact a Medicare prescription drug benefit?

Our senior citizens deserve more—much more. Passing this bill is the very least we can do. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation—and invite you to join me in efforts to ensure retirement security for all older Americans.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H.R. 5, the "Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act."

For years my constituents have raised concerns about unfair Social Security earnings limit. Finally, the House is going to eliminate this unfair penalty.

Whenever a working retiree earns more than \$17,000 per year, they lose \$1 of Social Security benefits for every \$3 they earn above the limit. We penalize senior citizens who want to continue to participate in the work force.

There are 800,000 senior citizens who lose part or all of the Social Security benefits they've worked hard for because they earn "too much" money in retirement.

The Social Security earnings limit was created during the Great Depression and it pun-

ishes senior citizens for their work ethic and desire to be self-reliant in their "golden years."

Today unemployment is at an all-time low. The experience and skills developed by older workers during a lifetime in the workplace are being recognized and are in demand.

Social Security recipients are entitled to their benefits because they earned them during a lifetime of hard work. The government should not take those benefits away because individuals want to work. That's why I strongly support the passage of H.R. 5 today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act (H.R. 5). The Social Security earnings limit discourages those on retirement from remaining in the work force and contributing to the country's economic growth. Due to the longer life-spans and the improved quality of health among retirees, the advent of an aging society, and decreasing work force growth numbers, it is imperative that we explore better ways to tap the valuable and often underutilized resources of older Americans.

Due to the retirement earnings test, Social Security beneficiaries who have attained the normal retirement age (presently age 65) have their benefits reduced by \$1 for every \$3 that they earn in excess of \$17,000. Similarly, Social Security beneficiaries between age 62 and the normal retirement age have their benefits reduced by \$1 for every \$2 that they earn in excess of \$10,800. Although both groups of beneficiaries receive benefit increases once they stop working in order to compensate for reductions while they were working, there are a number of good reasons to support repealing the earnings test for beneficiaries who have reached the normal retirement age.

Repealing the retirement earnings test will allow thousands of Social Security recipients to work without a reduction in their benefits. The Social Security Administration estimates that, in 1999, 793,000 beneficiaries aged 65 through 69 had some or all of their benefits withheld because of the retirement earnings test.

Repealing the retirement earnings test may create positive work incentives. Because many Social Security beneficiaries are unaware that the benefit reductions they experience when they are working are offset by benefit increases once they stop working, they may perceive the retirement earnings test as a tax. In response, they may reduce the number of hours they work or they may decide to leave the labor force altogether.

The most recent economic research indicates that repealing the retirement earnings test for beneficiaries between the normal retirement age and age 69 may encourage work. In a 1998 study, Leora Friedberg, an economist at the University of California, San Diego, found that repealing the retirement earnings test for those beneficiaries would increase their labor supply by about five percent.

Repealing the retirement earnings test will not affect Social Security's finances over the long run. Repealing the RET for beneficiaries who have reached the normal retirement age would not change (for better or for worse) Social Security's currently projected long-range financing shortfall. Repealing the retirement earnings test for beneficiaries above the normal retirement age has a significant short-run cost (\$22.7 billion over the next 10 years), but, over the long run, that cost is offset by lower benefit payments.

Again, under current law, workers who have their benefits reduced due to the retirement earnings test receive an actuarial adjustment that increases their benefits once they stop working. Repealing the retirement earnings test would mean that such workers would no longer receive that actuarial adjustment and that benefit payments would be lower.

Repealing the retirement earnings test will make the Social Security program easier and less expensive to administer. The Social Security Administration estimates that the cost of administering the earnings test in 1999 ranged from \$100 to \$150 million.

Since those costs include administering the earnings test for workers between age 62 and the normal retirement age, repealing the retirement earnings test for workers above the normal retirement age would save less than that amount.)

In addition, Social Security Administration estimates that it overpaid \$787 million in benefits due to the retirement earnings test in 1997. Payments to beneficiaries aged 65 through 69 accounted for 63 percent of retirement earnings test related overpayments in 1998.

If older Americans have the capacity to earn more money without penalty, there will be a greater incentive for them to work. Working older Americans contribute additional money to the economy and provide more revenue for the treasury. Furthermore, with advances in medical technology older Americans will remain healthy longer and live longer productive lives.

I join with my Democratic colleagues and strongly support eliminating the retirement earnings test that penalizes and discourages workers age 65 through 69 from remaining in the workforce and contributing to our prosperous economy.

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, later today, the House of Representatives will pass H.R. 5, the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act. This Act will eliminate the current tax law which penalizes senior citizens between 65–69 who continue to work. The Senior Citizens Earnings Test taxes senior citizens up to 33 percent of a senior's Social Security benefits.

One of the most egregious elements of our tax code is the continued over-taxing of American senior citizens who want to continue working. Repealing this tax on working seniors was the first bill I cosponsored when I was sworn into office in 1995, and, finally, I think we see light at the end of this tunnel. I would like to thank Speaker HASTERT for his leadership on this issue for more than a decade.

This Social Security Earnings Test has two adverse effects: it discourages seniors from working and for those who do work, it takes away a portion of the Social Security benefits they have earned. With today's labor shortage, this policy is greatly outdated and needs changing.

The Senior Citizens earnings tax penalty takes \$1 of working seniors' Social Security benefits for every \$3 they earn over a federal imposed income limit. Seniors earning more than \$17,000 are subject to the earnings tax. In 1999 there were over 4 million working senior citizens, at least 800,000 of them lost some of their Social Security benefits because of the earnings test. By repealing this tax penalty, the ten year benefit to senior citizens would be about \$23 billion. Seniors can use this extra money for helping with their grandchildren's

education, a trip to visit their family or other loved ones, a car, medical expenses, and prescription drugs.

Republicans have ended 40 years of raiding the Social Security Trust Fund to fund pet projects by tax and spend politicians. Repealing this seniors' tax builds on that commitment to senior citizens by making sure they get the benefits they have worked for, even if they choose to continue working. In Florida, over 80,000 seniors could be able to take advantage of this tax fairness package. This bill ensure that they get the money they have earned as well as the Social Security benefits they deserve.

A similar bill introduced in 1998 as part of the plan to abolish the Social Security earnings limit only received support from 19 House Democrats. This year the President has indicated his willingness to sign such a bill, but he did not include it in his recently submitted FY 2001 budget. The measure enjoys support from such groups as AARP, United Seniors Association, and the 60 Plus Association. Let's do the right thing and pass this bill.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, millions of older Americans are penalized every year simply because they set their alarm clocks to get up early in the morning, get dressed and head off to work. But unlike the rest of us who pull into rush hour traffic in the morning, that 65 year old in the car next to yours is paying the government a fee to go to work that day. That fee is called the Social Security Earnings Limitation.

My colleagues, today we can eliminate that fee and undo that injustice. Today we can begin to give America's senior citizens equal treatment under the nation's tax laws. Today we can guarantee that those senior Americans who want to continue to work—and can continue to work—today we can guarantee that they won't be penalized for making that contribution to their families, to their communities and to society in general.

By allowing older Americans the opportunity to stay in the workforce without penalty, we are allowing them to supplement their incomes, we are helping them to stay healthier, and we are giving them the opportunity to add to their later retirement. This is especially important as we see more and more Americans living into the eighties, their nineties and even into their hundreds.

So I encourage my colleagues today to give their older neighbors a fair break. Vote for the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act.

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that another popular tax relief proposal, the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act, is coming up for a vote today. First, let me point out that the debate over H.R. 5 should contain no rhetoric that this repeal of the Social Security earnings limit will break the bank. The Social Security actuaries have confirmed that repeal of the earnings limit maintains the current projected solvency of the Social Security Trust Fund.

The repeal of the Social Security earnings limit for individuals who have attained the full retirement age has been a very high priority of mine and for my Republican colleagues elected to the House in 1986. Although we were able a few years ago to secure a gradual increase in the earnings limit for seniors who were 65 to 69 years old, the complete repeal of the earnings limit for this group is a big victory. I am pleased that so many senior citi-

zens' groups have joined us in this fight, and I welcome President Clinton's announced support for this repeal as well.

The Social Security earnings limit is a relic of the Great Depression when it was necessary to entice older workers to leave the work force, making more jobs available to younger workers. Today, many businesses and communities face a serious worker shortage. My congressional district has an especially low rate of unemployment now: a meager 1.6 percent. This means that opportunities for older workers abound, providing earning potential and related benefits to the seniors willing and physically able to meet the challenge. Further, I am pleased that H.R. 5 provides immediate relief by covering income earned after December 31, 1999.

For those in the 10th Congressional District and elsewhere who do not know me well, I am proud to report that I am a working senior. Too old now to benefit from this change in the tax code, I nevertheless enjoy a higher quality of life—and perhaps better health—which comes with being more active. In addition, I feel that my many years of experience add to my job performance as a long work history does for so many seniors.

Again, let me say that I appreciate the support of our colleagues in getting this repeal bill before the House today. Our Nation's seniors deserve this extra incentive to remain productive in their later years and our work force needs them.

Mr. BUYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5, the Senior Citizens Freedom to Work Act. I have long supported repeal of this onerous, burdensome rule on this nation's working seniors.

The earnings limit penalty requires seniors age 65 to 69 who earn over \$17,000 to forfeit 33% of their Social Security benefits. Seniors with golden parachutes or extensive investments do not face such a penalty . . . only those who get up every morning, head off to work, and make valuable contributions to our labor force. This is unfair.

As a relic of the Great Depression, Congress is overdue to reform this antiquated law. The earnings limit is a great disincentive to seniors to remain in the workforce if they so choose. In reality, it is the imposition of a high marginal tax rate on productive seniors in the workforce, who are also paying federal and state income taxes, and Social Security payroll taxes.

I'm pleased to see this legislation come to the floor in a bipartisan fashion. I'm pleased the President has indicated he will sign it. I look forward to lifting this burden from working seniors.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, today we are considering very important legislation which will eliminate one of the most unfair tax burdens even placed on Americans and give our senior citizens the freedom to work.

The high tax rate on the earnings of older Americans has created a significant roadblock at a time when workforce participation by these individuals is extremely important to the continuing growth of the U.S. economy. Economists and Federal Reserve Board officials, including Chairman Alan Greenspan, have expressed concern that the shrinking pool of available workers cannot satisfy the surging quantity of goods and services demanded by the American people and people around the world.

I have heard a number of stories, some during a hearing I held as Chairman of the Oversight Subcommittee for the Education & Workforce Committee, and others more recently during town hall meetings I held last week in West Michigan. In each case the message was the same: the current system discourages older Americans from re-entering or continuing in the workforce. We need to keep these individuals in the workforce and the repeal of the earnings limit will be an essential step in encouraging their participation.

Mr. Speaker, I should also note that as seniors and others enter the workforce, there is one thing they do not know—the true costs of Social Security and Medicare. Currently, an employee's W-2 lists his or hers withholdings for Social Security and Medicare. What the employees don't know, is how much their employer also pays for these programs. This is another unfairness we need to correct by passing the Right To Know National Payroll Act, which would require the employers share of Social Security and Medicare taxes to be disclosed on each employee's annual W-2. American workers have a right to know the true costs of Social Security and Medicare.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, today, we are witnessing the best of Congress as Members of different ideologies and political parties come together for the benefit of the American people.

Today, the House of Representatives will pass the Senior Citizens Freedom to Work Act (H.R. 5) which will repeal the Depression-era earnings limit imposed on Social Security recipients between the ages of 65 and 69 who decide to supplement their retirement income by working. Under current law, seniors who work lose \$1 of their Social Security benefits for every \$3 they earn outside earned income beyond \$17,000 a year.

In the real world, this outdated law has adversely affected several thousand of my constituents in Queens and the Bronx. A number of seniors in my district have gotten part-time jobs to supplement their income so as to improve their quality of life, offset some of their expenses such as the high costs of their prescription drugs and remain active.

Unfortunately, once many of these seniors recognize how much they are losing in their Social Security benefits by working, they quit their jobs.

I believe it is both foolish and counterproductive to punish working people.

This legislation will assist people like Mr. Christopher Christie, a constituent of mine from the Bronx, New York. He was punished by the earning limit. After he retired, he spent several weeks working in a small business she operated and as a doorman on Park Avenue. He saw his Social Security check garnished monthly because of his outside jobs.

Therefore, I am pleased that the House is debating this legislation to repeal the earnings limit and allow our seniors the freedom to work and attain some financial independence.

This bill represents a solid first step in improving the quality of life of America's seniors. I hope that Congress will now address the other issues of importance to seniors, such as the inclusion of prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the bill H.R. 5, The Senior Citizens Freedom to Work act.

Under current law, seniors who claim Social Security benefits before they reach 69 are

subject to a reduction in benefits if they continue to work. For seniors 65 to 69, benefits are reduced by \$1 for every \$3 that their earnings exceed the limit, which was \$17,000 in 2000, and which rises to \$30,000 in 2002 and is indexed after that. This bill would repeal these limits entirely, effective immediately.

The earnings limit originated in the 1930's and has remained in effect because Congress never changed it, despite the vast changes in the economy and the lives of senior citizens that have taken place in the last 60 years.

Nearly 50,000 senior citizens in Texas are currently being penalized for working, a prospect that does not bode well for the economic circumstances for those in the twilight of their lives. We should not punish senior citizens for participating in the workforce; we should reward that. People remain healthy and vigorous much longer than they did in the 1930's.

It makes sense to repeal this obsolete and punitive limit. I have supported raising the limit in past years and support repealing it now. Today's legislation is important to consider as part of a broader plan to use the surplus to extend the life of Social Security and Medicare and pay down the debt.

Today, we can take the first step towards strengthening retirement security for all seniors. But this step was just the very beginning of what we must do in order to put Social Security on a firm financial footing well into the 21st century. I hope the House of Representatives, which showed such passion today when talking about removing the earnings limit will show the same kind of passion over the next few months as we debate the proper use of the surplus. We must use the budget surplus to strengthen Social Security and Medicare.

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong and stringent support of H.R. 5, the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act. Current law limits the income of retirees ages 65 to 69 to \$17,000. Social Security benefits are reduced one dollar for every three dollars earned above \$17,000. Social Security Administration statistics show that nearly "690,000 beneficiaries between 65 and 69 lose some or all of their benefits because of excess earnings resulting from their work." This bill, which repeals the earnings limits imposed under Social Security on our nation's working senior citizens, is a welcomed measure which will allow our seniors to continue to contribute to our growing economy.

The earnings limit is an outdated relic of the depression era social security program. It was instituted based on a policy that addressed a problem of that time; however, times have changed. Then, our nation was worried about moving seniors out of the work force to make room for the growing number of younger workers. Now, labor statistics indicate that as our nation's population ages, there will be a shortage of workers available to meet our future labor needs. H.R. 5 is needed to provide incentive to seniors to help supplement the nation's future need for workers.

Past Social Security policy overlooked the valuable assets that senior citizens bring to our nation's workforce. Seniors have a wealth of wisdom and experience to offer the workforce. Most enjoy bestowing the benefit of their experience and wisdom on younger workers and generally offer their knowledge for reasons other than the sheer pursuit of wealth. Seniors tend to exemplify the attributes of hard-work, punctuality and patience.

In this time of instant gratification, I can think of no better teachers of the value of a work ethic which developed over time can be passed on to future generations. Seniors have much to offer and this bill will make it easier for the workforce to receive the benefit of their wisdom and experience.

Seniors have worked long and hard to earn and they should not be deprived of the fruits of their labor. Today, seniors are living longer and healthier lives and they are more fit and willing than ever to contribute to our nation's workforce. Many view working as a necessary part of their well-being and quality of life. As a society we should not handicap the lifestyle of those who choose to work into their silver years. H.R. 5 reconciles past policy that punished seniors by forcing them to sit on the sidelines of the workforce.

There are also many seniors who have no choice but to work. Skyrocketing, pharmaceutical prices have left seniors struggling to meet the financial burden of much needed medicine. Every year we listen to the stories of seniors who die in their home due to their inability to meet the heating or air-conditioning costs. How can we continue to penalize them for their necessary efforts to meet those costs?

Unfortunately, many of the seniors who need to work most are our nation's women, who outlive their male spouse 75% of the time. Indeed, "103,000 dependent and spousal beneficiaries are affected by the limit." Widowed women often are forced to reenter the work force in order to meet their basic needs. They should not be forced to lose some or all of their retirement benefits, while striving to secure the simple necessities of living.

While I support and applaud this effort on behalf of our nation's seniors, I would be remiss not to mention the continued problem facing Social Security. Ensuring the future solvency of the Social Security Trust Fund is a problem this Congress still must address. It is my hope that H.R. 5, is simply a stepping stone along the path of addressing a problem that is not going to go away. I urge the leadership of this House to bring forth legislation that seeks to make the tough decisions necessary to address the solvency of the Social Security Trust Fund before we are faced with even tougher more painful decisions.

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Speaker of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), for his long commitment to repealing the punitive tax on seniors. One of the first bills I sponsored way back in 1989, during my first year in Congress, was DENNY HASTERT's "Older Americans' Freedom to Work Act." I'm delighted that we are finally moving forward with this historic legislation. It is long overdue.

I recently pointed out, while arguing for repeal of the marriage penalty tax, that in America you should not be discriminated against by our tax code solely because of your status. We have civil rights laws in America to make sure that each of us is protected against unfair treatment by our government. Yet, just as the marriage penalty discriminates against people who are married, the earnings test discriminates against people over 65 who choose to stay productive.

This costly and regressive tax forces many seniors from the job market. Whereas 50 years ago 47% of men over 65 were employed in the labor force, today it is only 16.5%.

A senior who chooses to work after the retirement age of 65 faces a tax burden that amounts to government confiscation. A senior who chooses to work loses \$1 in Social Security benefits for every \$3 in wages and salaries he or she earns over \$17,000. Yet \$17,000 is close to the official U.S. government poverty level for working families. When one adds the burdens of income and payroll taxes, this amounts to a marginal tax rate on working seniors as high as 80%—higher than the rate for billionaires.

The government should not penalize working seniors by canceling their Social Security benefits. These benefits are not welfare; they have been earned over a lifetime of hard work.

Repeal of the earnings test is also another important step toward ensuring that Social Security is always there for seniors. I am hopeful we can bring the same bipartisan support we have today to the upcoming debate on supplementing Social Security benefits through personal retirement accounts.

The Clinton-Gore administration has had eight years to repeal this discriminatory burden on seniors. The Democratic Congress has 40 years to do it. Not only did they fail to do so, they raised taxes on working seniors. The 1993 Clinton tax increase included a 70% increase in income taxes on Social Security benefits, for seniors earning as little as \$34,000.

In 1996, for the first time ever, the new Republican majority in Congress provided relief to seniors by reducing the Social Security earnings penalty. The new law more than doubled the amount a senior citizen could earn without losing his or her Social Security benefits, from \$11,280 to \$30,000 in 2002. This change has already had a positive effect: the number of senior citizens choosing to remain in the labor force has increased by 7%. Today's long-overdue step—passage of H.R. 5 to completely repeal the unfair earnings test—finally finishes the job Congress started in 1996, and that Speaker HASTERT started more than a decade ago.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand with members of Congress who have introduced bills that advocate comprehensive reform of Social Security. We understand the immensity of the challenge facing the country as baby boomers retire, how demographics result in a huge responsibility for future generations, and the importance of preparing Social Security for the future. You will find repeal in the Social Security Solvency Act for 2000, which I introduced in November. Bills that I introduced this year and last year, including the Social Security Solvency Act for 2000, included elimination of the earnings limit, plus another provision that I consider to be the counterbalance to the earnings test—accelerating the increase in the “delayed retirement credit” or DRC.

If a worker decides to continue working after 65 and defer his monthly benefit, the DRC increases the size of his monthly check he will ultimately receive from Social Security. A worker who turns 65 this year will see his benefits increase 6 percent for every year he defers his benefit. Current law allows a worker to delay retirement for up to five years, working until he reaches 70. If that retiree's monthly benefit was \$1,000 when he turned 65, it will be \$1,300 if he puts off receiving a Social Security check until he's 70—that's an extra

\$3,600 a year. However, if that worker enjoys an average length of retirement, this delay puts him at a disadvantage. He should be receiving an extra \$4,800 a year, not \$3,600.

Under current law, the DRC is set to rise to 8 percent in 2008. This is the amount that Social Security considers to be “actuarially sound.” That means that a retiree who delays receiving his benefit is getting proper compensation in the future for the money he does not get today. As we eliminate the earnings limit, it is reasonable to include an increase in the DRC. Retirees deserve a fair deal today—not in 2008. Now that we are taking away the earnings limit that discourages senior citizens from working, we should accelerate the DRC and encourage them to “save” so they have a higher benefit during the years they no longer have outside earnings. The accelerated DRC will encourage people to work as long as they choose. The Social Security actuaries have examined my proposal to accelerate the DRC, and they say it is actuarially sound. It doesn't cost taxpayers or weaken the Social Security trust fund.

There are three reasons to accelerate the DRC:

1. Fairness—Give workers who choose to delay receiving their Social Security benefit an increase that is consistent with actuarial assumptions.

2. Choice—Give senior citizens more options to manage their retirement—they choose when they retire and when they should apply for benefits.

3. To Fight Poverty—Give a higher survivor benefit to widows whose spouses took benefits based on the DRC.

When I learned of the Ways and Means markup of H.R. 5, I approached Representative SHAW and Representative ARCHER, and presented my amendment to accelerate the DRC. After careful consideration by the Social Security subcommittee, I received agreement to add this amendment. Gene Sperling called me on the evening of Feb. 28 to tell me that the President had agreed to support it, and the minority gave their consent on Tuesday.

This amendment is too important to be stalled by politics. I will continue to fight for its inclusion, and I remain optimistic that I will see the DRC acceleration language in the bill that President Clinton finally signs into law.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of bringing relief to thousands of seniors who are unfairly punished by the Social Security earnings penalty. For too many seniors, working after they turn 65 isn't an option—it is a necessity. They can ill afford a smaller Social Security check each month. We should fix this inequity and do what is fair and right for our seniors. They deserve nothing less.

Last week, I met with a group of working seniors in West Haven, Connecticut. One was Mary Grabowski. Mary recently retired, but she quickly realized she had to continue to work after she turned 65 because she simply couldn't afford not to. It wasn't a choice. It wasn't so she could make a little extra money on the side. It was about being able to pay her bills.

I also listened to the story of Estelle Stuart. Estelle is also a recent retiree who came to realize that Social Security simply isn't going to be enough for her to get by. In particular, Estelle is forced to work in order to pay for the prescription drugs she desperately needs.

Mary Grabowski, Estelle Stuart, and the thousands of other seniors like them who must

continue to work after 65, are perfect examples of why the earnings penalty is wrong and why we need to end it. I want to thank both of them for sharing their story with me.

Ending the earnings penalty today is a good start. It's important to thousands of seniors. But tomorrow, let's get to work and pass a responsible plan that will strengthen Social Security and Medicare, and provide our seniors with a prescription drug benefit. It is a plan that honors our seniors and protects our values. We've taken a positive first step today. Let's get to work and finish the job.

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, the second session of the 106th Congress has been off to a quick start passing landmark legislation that directly impacts millions of Americans and improves our quality of life.

First, we repealed the Marriage Penalty Tax, and today, we will ensure that older men and women still in the workforce will be able to keep more of their hard-earned money without losing important Social Security benefits.

Mr. Speaker, as you are well aware, the golden years for many older men and women in America involve all types of activities. More and more, older Americans are sharing their lifelong experience in business and industry with a new generation of Americans in the workplace. Benefiting from tremendous advances in health care and increasing life expectancy rates, our older people—the generation of men and women who carried our nation through World War II, and beyond—continue to contribute to the economic well being of our state and nation.

While some older men and women are working because they need the paycheck to put food on the table, others keep working simply because they like what they do and see no reason to stop doing it just because they have reached their sixty-fifth birthday.

Right now, the tax code penalizes older Americans who choose to keep working. Over 800,000 seniors today lose part or all of their Social Security benefits because of the Social Security “earnings limit.” Almost 37,000 older men and women in New Jersey alone are hit by this unfair penalty.

The present limit cuts or entirely eliminates Social Security benefits for working older men and women whose yearly incomes exceed a certain amount. In 2000, working Americans between the ages of 65–69 will lose \$1 in Social Security benefits for every \$3 in earnings over the limit.

The Social Security earnings limit was created during the Great Depression when jobs were scarce. It was designed to encourage older workers to leave the workforce to free up jobs for younger workers. What may have been good policy during the worst economic downturn in American history is bad policy today during one of the best economic cycles with more challenges and opportunities for everyone.

Our economy is booming and unemployment is at a record low. These working older men and women are an important part of that success. They should be encouraged to remain a vital part of the work force rather than be penalized for their labors. In addition, people today are living longer and healthier lives. Soon, millions of baby boomers will reach retirement age. If these people wish to remain productive members of the workforce long past their sixty-fifth birthday, their experiences, industry, and productiveness should be rewarded.

The Social Security earnings limit penalty is wrong, unfair, and should be scrapped. With the President in agreement, and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in full support, let's pass "The Senior Citizens Freedom to Work Act" (H.R. 5), after so many years of inaction.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). All time for debate having expired, pursuant to the order of the House of today, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members.

The Chair announces that the vote on the Speaker's approval of the Journal, if ordered, will immediately follow this vote, and will be a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 422, nays 0, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 27]

YEAS—422

Abercrombie	Bryant	DeLay
Ackerman	Burr	DeMint
Aderholt	Burton	Deutsch
Allen	Buyer	Diaz-Balart
Andrews	Callahan	Dickey
Archer	Calvert	Dicks
Army	Camp	Dingell
Baca	Canady	Dixon
Bachus	Cannon	Doggett
Baird	Capps	Dooley
Baker	Capuano	Doolittle
Baldacci	Cardin	Doyle
Baldwin	Carson	Dreier
Ballenger	Castle	Duncan
Barcia	Chabot	Dunn
Barr	Chambliss	Edwards
Barrett (NE)	Chenoweth-Hage	Ehlers
Barrett (WI)	Clay	Ehrlich
Bartlett	Clayton	Emerson
Barton	Clement	Engel
Bass	Clyburn	English
Bateman	Coble	Eshoo
Becerra	Coburn	Etheridge
Bentsen	Collins	Evans
Bereuter	Combust	Everett
Berkley	Condit	Ewing
Berman	Conyers	Farr
Berry	Cooksey	Fattah
Biggert	Costello	Filner
Bilbray	Cox	Fletcher
Bilirakis	Coyne	Foley
Bishop	Cramer	Forbes
Blagojevich	Crane	Ford
Blumenauer	Crowley	Fossella
Blunt	Cubin	Fowler
Boehlerl	Cummings	Frank (MA)
Boehner	Cunningham	Franks (NJ)
Bonilla	Danner	Frelinghuysen
Bonior	Davis (FL)	Frost
Bono	Davis (IL)	Gallegly
Borski	Davis (VA)	Ganske
Boswell	Deal	Gejdenson
Boucher	DeFazio	Gekas
Boyd	DeGette	Gephardt
Brady (PA)	Delahunt	Gibbons
Brown (FL)	DeLauro	Gilcrest

Gillmor	Luther	Ryan (WI)
Gilman	Maloney (CT)	Ryun (KS)
Gonzalez	Maloney (NY)	Sabo
Goode	Manzullo	Salmon
Goodlatte	Markey	Sanchez
Goodling	Martinez	Sanders
Gordon	Mascara	Sandlin
Goss	Matsui	Sanford
Graham	McCarthy (MO)	Sawyer
Granger	McCarthy (NY)	Saxton
Green (TX)	McCollum	Scarborough
Green (WI)	McCrery	Schaffer
Greenwood	McDermott	Schakowsky
Gutierrez	McGovern	Scott
Gutknecht	McHugh	Sensenbrenner
Hall (OH)	McInnis	Serrano
Hall (TX)	McIntosh	Sessions
Hansen	McIntyre	Shadegg
Hastert	McKeon	Shaw
Hastings (FL)	McKinney	Shays
Hastings (WA)	McNulty	Sherman
Hayes	Meehan	Sherwood
Hayworth	MEEK (FL)	Shimkus
Hefley	Meeks (NY)	Shows
Herger	Menendez	Shuster
Hill (IN)	Metcalfe	Simpson
Hill (MT)	Miller (FL)	Sisisky
Hilleary	Miller, Gary	Skeen
Hilliard	Miller, George	Skelton
Hinchee	Minge	Slaughter
Hinojosa	Mink	Smith (MI)
Hobson	Moakley	Smith (NJ)
Hoeffel	Mollohan	Smith (TX)
Hoekstra	Moran (KS)	Smith (WA)
Holden	Moran (VA)	Snyder
Holt	Morella	Souder
Hooley	Murtha	Spence
Hostettler	Myrick	Stabenow
Houghton	Nadler	Stark
Hoyer	Napolitano	Stearns
Hulshof	Neal	Stenholm
Hunter	Nethercutt	Strickland
Hutchinson	Ney	Stump
Hyde	Northup	Stupak
Inslee	Nussle	Sununu
Isakson	Oberstar	Sweeney
Istook	Obey	Talent
Jackson (IL)	Oliver	Tancredo
Jackson-Lee	Ortiz	Tanner
(TX)	Ose	Tauscher
Jefferson	Owens	Tauzin
Jenkins	John	Taylor (MS)
John (OH)	Johnson (CT)	Taylor (NC)
Johnson, E. B.	Johnson, Sam	Terry
Johnson, Sam	Jones (NC)	Thomas
Jones (NC)	Jones (OH)	Thompson (CA)
Kanjorski	Kaptur	Thompson (MS)
Kasich	Kasich	Thornberry
Kelly	Kelly	Thune
Kennedy	Kennedy	Thurman
Kildee	Kildee	Tiahrt
Kind (WI)	Kind (NY)	Tierney
King (NY)	Kingston	Toomey
Kleczka	Kleczka	Towns
Klink	Knollenberg	Traficant
Knollenberg	Kolbe	Turner
Kolbe	Kucinich	Udall (CO)
Kucinich	Kuykendall	Udall (NM)
Kuykendall	LaFalce	Upton
LaFalce	LaHood	Velazquez
LaHood	Lampson	Velazquez
Lampson	Lantos	Visclosky
Lantos	Largent	Vitter
Largent	Larson	Walden
Larson	Latham	Walsh
Latham	LaTourette	Wamp
LaTourette	Lazio	Watkins
Reynolds	Leach	Watt (NC)
Rahall	Lee	Watts (OK)
Ramstad	Levin	Waxman
Rangel	Lewis (CA)	Weiner
Regula	Lewis (GA)	Weldon (FL)
Reyes	Lewis (KY)	Weldon (PA)
Rhodes	Linder	Weller
Riley	Lipinski	Wexler
Rivers	LoBiondo	Weygand
Rodriguez	Lofgren	Whitfield
Roemer	Lowey	Wicker
Rogan	Lucas (KY)	Wilson
Rogers	Lucas (OK)	Wise
Rohrabacher	Bliley	Wolf
Ros-Lehtinen	Brady (TX)	Woolsey
Rothman	Brown (OH)	Wu
Roukema	Campbell	Wynn
Roybal-Allard		Young (AK)
Royce		Young (FL)
Rush		

NOT VOTING—13

Kilpatrick	Millender-	Spratt
Mica	McDonald	Vento
	Norwood	Waters

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Mr. DIXON changed his vote from "nay" to "yea."

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I did not hear the bells on rollcall 27. I spoke in support of the bill, H.R. 5, and I would have voted in favor of the bill had I been present.

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 27, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 27, the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act, on which I addressed the House, I was regretfully delayed on official business with a visiting delegation from the German Bundestag. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Mr. NORWOOD. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 27, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 27, I was inadvertently detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

Mr. BLILEY. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 27, had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, the pending business is the question of the Chair's approval of the Journal of the last day's proceedings.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

IRAN NONPROLIFERATION ACT OF 1999

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order at any time today to take from the Speaker's table H.R. 1883, with Senate amendments thereto, and to consider in the House a motion offered by the Chairman of the Committee on International Relations or his designee that the House concur in the Senate amendments; that the Senate amendments and the motion be considered as read; that the motion be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on International Relations, or their designees; and that the previous question be considered as ordered on the motion to final adoption without intervening motion or demand for division of the question.

The SPEAKER. Is there objection to the motion offered by the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the unanimous consent request just agreed to, I call up the bill (H.R. 1883) to provide for the application of measures to foreign persons who transfer to Iran certain goods, services, or technology, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

MOTION OFFERED BY MR. GILMAN

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion.

The SPEAKER. The Clerk will designate the motion.

The text of the motion is as follows:

Mr. GILMAN moves to concur in the Senate amendments to H.R. 1883.

The text of the Senate amendments is as follows:

Senate Amendments: Page 2, line 3, strike out "1999" and insert "2000".

Page 5, line 7, strike out all after "Order" down to and including "person." in line 8 and insert "No. 12938."

Page 5, Line 9, strike out all after "prohibition.—" down to and including "terminate" in line 12 and insert "Prohibition on United States Government sales to that foreign person of any item on the United States Munitions List as in effect on August 8, 1995, and termination of".

Page 5, Lines 16 and 17, strike out "The President shall deny licenses and suspend" and insert "Denial of licenses and suspension of".

Page 8, after line 23, insert:

"(b) Opportunity To Provide Information.—Congress urges the President—

"(1) in every appropriate case, to contact in a timely fashion each foreign person identified in each report submitted pursuant to section 2(a), or the government with primary jurisdiction over such person, in order to afford such person, or governments, the opportunity to provide explanatory, exculpatory, or other additional information with respect to the transfer that caused such person to be identified in a report submitted pursuant to section 2(a); and

"(2) to exercise the authority in subsection (a) in all cases where information obtained from a foreign person identified in a report submitted pursuant to section 2(a), or from the government with primary jurisdiction over such person, establishes that the exercise of such authority is warranted."

Page 8, line 24, strike out "(b)" and insert "(c)".

Page 9, line 11, strike out "Russian Space Agency" and insert "Russian Aviation and Space Agency".

Page 9, lines 12 and 13, strike out "Russian Space Agency" and insert "Russian Aviation and Space Agency".

Page 10, Lines 11 and 12, strike out "through the implementation of concrete steps".

Page 10, Line 16, strike out all after "systems" down to and including "transfers" in line 18.

Page 10, Line 19, strike out "Russian Space Agency" and insert "Russian Aviation and Space Agency".

Page 10, Line 21, strike out "Russian Space Agency" and insert "Russian Aviation and Space Agency".

Page 11, Line 25, strike out "Russian Space Agency" and insert "Russian Aviation and Space Agency".

Page 12, Line 2, strike out "Russian Space Agency" and insert "Russian Aviation and Space Agency".

Page 13, Line 6, strike out "Russian Space Agency" and insert "Russian Aviation and Space Agency".

Page 13, Line 8, strike out "Russian Space Agency" and insert "Russian Aviation and Space Agency".

Page 13, Line 10, after "Module" insert ", and for the purchase (at a total cost not to exceed \$14,000,000) of the pressure dome for the Interim Control Module and the Androgynous Peripheral Docking Adapter and related hardware for the United States propulsion module."

Page 13, line 15, after "no" insert "credible".

Page 17, lines 15 and 16, strike out "Russian Space Agency" and insert "Russian Aviation and Space Agency".

Page 17, lines 17 and 18, strike out "Russian Space Agency" and insert "Russian Aviation and Space Agency".

Page 18, lines 1 and 2, strike out "Russian Space Agency" and insert "Russian Aviation and Space Agency or Russian Space Agency".

Page 18, line 6, strike out "Russian Space Agency" and insert "Russian Aviation and Space Agency or Russian Space Agency".

Page 18, line 10, strike out "Russian Space Agency" and insert "Russian Aviation and Space Agency".

Page 18, lines 13 and 14, strike out "Russian Space Agency" and insert "Russian Aviation and Space Agency or Russian Space Agency".

Page 18, line 15, strike out "Russian Space Agency" and insert "Russian Aviation and Space Agency or Russian Space Agency".

Page 18, Line 16, strike out "Russian Space Agency" and insert "Russian Aviation and Space Agency or Russian Space Agency".

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House today, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. GEJDENSON) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 1883.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

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

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

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, we have before us H.R. 1883, the Iran Non-proliferation Act of 2000. This measure was introduced by the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. GEJDENSON), the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER), the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN), and myself on May 20 of last year. There are almost 230 cosponsors on this measure.

When it came to a vote in the House last September, it was approved by a vote of 419 to 0. This vote was even more remarkable when one considers that the administration sent us a letter just before the House voted stating that the President's senior advisors would recommend that he veto the bill. Obviously, the administration's plea that we not approve the bill, that we instead allow more time for diplomacy, was rejected unanimously by the House.

Just last week, the measure came up in the Senate, and the Senate brushed aside the administration's objection and approved the bill by a significant vote of 98 to 0.

The unanimity of both chambers of Congress and the strong bipartisan sup-

port for this measure should send a powerful signal to would-be proliferators to Iran. Our Nation will not accept the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missiles to Iran.

Mr. Speaker, this situation is true today, and it will remain true even if the encouraging political developments we are beginning to observe in Iran lead eventually to major improvements in Iranian foreign policy. The fact is a democratic Iran at peace with itself and with the rest of the world will not need or want weapons of mass destruction, nor will they need any missiles capable of delivering such weapons.

Political change in Iran may ultimately eliminate the need for this kind of legislation. But such change will never make us regret enacting it. Indeed, we fully expect that the leaders of a democratic and a peaceful Iran would have no complaints about this legislation because it would be wholly consistent with the policies that they would pursue.

For now, however, Iran is continuing its programs to develop weapons of mass destruction, and this poses a great threat to our Nation, to our military personnel in the Persian Gulf, and to our friends and allies throughout the region. This legislation states to those nations and entities that are helping Iran's weapons programs that they must stop or face severe consequences.

I am confident that the unanimous vote in both houses of Congress will compel the President to reconsider the administration's threat to veto this legislation.

I want to clarify for the record that no major substantive changes in the legislation were made by the Senate amendment that was adopted last week. Due to the courtesy of the chief sponsors of the Senate companion measure to H.R. 1838, most notably Senators LOTT and LIEBERMAN, I was fully involved in developing the Senate amendment. Indeed, two of the most significant changes it made was suggested by me to the sponsors of the Senate amendment. I can assure our colleagues the changes suggested were intended to strengthen, not weaken, this measure.

Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, the Senate amendment did not convert the bill from a mandatory sanctions bill into a bill merely authorizing the imposition of sanctions, as has been reported by the press. This bill always afforded the President discretion, discretion with regard to the imposition of sanctions, except in the case of the proliferation by entities under the jurisdiction or control of the Russian Aviation and Space Agency. The Senate amendment preserved that structure.

In order to underscore that the Senate amendment was almost entirely cosmetic in nature, I prepared a summary of the changes made by that amendment. This summary makes clear that the bill was not weakened in any way by the Senate amendment.

Mr. Speaker, I include the summary for the RECORD as follows:

SUMMARY OF SENATE AMENDMENT TO H.R. 1883, IRAN NONPROLIFERATION ACT OF 2000

During the Senate's consideration of the Iran Nonproliferation Act on February 24, 2000, a manager's amendment was adopted making a number of minor changes in the bill. These changes were largely technical or cosmetic in nature. They include.

The name of the bill was changed from the "Iran Nonproliferation Act of 1999" to the "Iran Nonproliferation Act of 2000".

The word "shall" was deleted at several places in the bill dealing with the possible imposition of sanctions on entities that transfer weapons technology to Iran. This was done to emphasize the fact (which is explicit elsewhere in the House-passed bill) that the imposition of such sanctions is discretionary rather than mandatory.

Language was inserted to emphasize that the president may contact entities suspected of transferring weapons technology to Iran in order to afford them an opportunity to demonstrate that they did not make such transfers. Again, this concept was already contained in the House-passed bill.

The name "Russian Space Agency" was changed to "Russian Aviation and Space Agency" most places that it appears in the bill in order to reflect the fact that the name of the agency has been officially changed by the Russian Government.

One element of the certification that the President would have to make in order to provide Russian "extraordinary payments in connection with the International Space Station" was revised to eliminate a requirement that Russia demonstrate its commitment to stop proliferation to Iran by implementing "concrete steps". The key element of this certification was not changed, however. The President would still have to certify that there is no credible information that any entity under the jurisdiction or control of the Russian Aviation and Space Agency has proliferated to Iran during the previous year in order to provide such extraordinary payments to Russia.

The Senate amendment expanded the exception to the bill's restriction on providing Russia "extraordinary payments in connection with the International Space Station". In addition to extraordinary payments related to the Russian Service Module (which were permitted under the House bill), the amendment permits a total of no more than \$14 million in extraordinary payments by the United States in order to buy from Russia two docking adaptors that will facilitate the attachment of two U.S. modules to the International Space Station. The conditions on making extraordinary payments pursuant to the exception (e.g., no credible information that a recipient of such payments has proliferated to Iran) remain unchanged.

Mr. Speaker, finally, I want to elaborate on one point that came up in the Senate debate on the measure. Senators LEVIN, LOTT, and LIEBERMAN agreed that, in deciding whether information is "credible," and I put that in quotes, for purposes of the reporting requirement of this bill, the President is entitled to judge the credibility of information on the basis of all information available to him.

This observation is unassailable so far as it goes. Obviously, one piece of information can be out of sync with all of the other available information that it is not believable. But this does not mean that incriminating information that is novel or surprising must be cor-

roborated before it can be deemed credible.

The Senators certainly did not mean to suggest that the President is entitled to judge one piece of specific information against the absence of other information, and on that basis conclude that one piece of information is not credible. Such will, in my estimation, be the typical case arising under this legislation, a piece of specific incriminating information will be found about a possible transfer, and there will be no other specific information pointing one way or another about that particular transfer. In this context, there really is no other available information against which the incriminating information can be judged. If the incriminating information is, on its face, believable, then the President will be required to report that situation to us pursuant to section 2(a) of the bill.

The real point in here, Mr. Speaker, is the one emphasized in the report of the Committee on International Relations on the bill. The purpose of the credible information standard is to get away from the preponderance of the evidence standard the administration has applied under previous nonproliferation laws.

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We do not want there to be any weighing of evidence or any burden of proof under the credible information standard. The test is whether the information is believable, not whether the President thinks it is likely true.

I want to thank my colleagues for the support they provided to H.R. 1883. And I urge them to once, again, cast a favorable vote on this measure.

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

I rise in strong support for this motion. While I have somewhat different interpretations than the chairman of the full committee, on some of the intent, the basic legislation does the job that we all sought to achieve in this nonproliferation act.

What is clear is that the timing is somewhat unfortunate, as I think the chairman referenced so aptly in his remarks, because for the first time in many years, we are seeing within Iran the development of an opposition that seems to want to moderate the policies of that country.

I certainly hope that no one would take that as a signal in this legislation that we have not recognized this great step forward, which is really a function, not of everything we have done or anything else, but a function of what the Iranians want for their country.

No matter what happens around the globe, it is an important goal of this administration, and I think in the interests of the entire world, to restrict access to nuclear weapons, chemical, biological and missile technology. This is clearly a case where the world is not safer by more people having access to this technology.

I think it is critically important for the Congress and the administration to work together to make sure that we do everything in our power, using Nunn-Lugar resources to reduce the availability of fissionable material and the technology expertise in the Soviet Union to further develop nuclear weapons and to proliferate.

There are tremendous pressures in the Soviet Union, former Soviet Union, Russia, both from their own kind of old pride of having once been a major superpower; and I think, additionally, the pressures for economic advancement to sell some of these technologies. But it is not in the Russian's best interests. It is clearly not in the world's best interests. It is not in our best interests.

I want to commend the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and others who have participated in this legislation. It is an important piece of legislation. I am very excited to have it here on the floor, only somewhat distressed that it comes by accident of the Senate schedule today so close to what was a positive development in Iran.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time and I ask unanimous consent that the remainder of my time be controlled by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. HOEFFEL).

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE.) Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Connecticut?

There was no objection.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER).

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Iran Nonproliferation Act of 2000 and urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this important message.

In 1993, the administration invited Russia to join the International Space Station project. At the time the White House made it clear to Congress that Russian participation in the International Space Station was a key component of the administration's efforts to encourage Russia to adhere to a variety of nonproliferation norms and agreements.

Many Members, myself included, expressed concerns about transforming the space station into a foreign policy program, but accepted the administration's argument that Russian involvement was important to halting the spread of ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction.

Since then, we have seen repeated reports in the Western and Russian media that a variety of Russian aerospace enterprises are assisting Iran's efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles. The CIA's 721 report of February 2, 2000 confirms these reports.

Russia's aerospace enterprises are not private firms in the way U.S. companies are. In fact, most Russian aerospace enterprises are owned and operated by the Russian government.

In 1998 and 1999, the Russian government clarified its control of its aerospace industry by putting many of these Russian enterprises under the legal and economic jurisdiction of the Russian Aviation and Space Agency.

Having paid the Russians some \$800 million between 1994 and 1998, the administration announced in late 1999 its intention to make additional payments to the Russian Aviation and Space Agency.

The administration's reliance on Russia has put the American taxpayer in the unacceptable position of possibly subsidizing the very Russian aerospace enterprises that are helping Iran develop weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles. The administration's current policy creates an unhealthy situation for both our space program and our nonproliferation efforts. H.R. 1883 addresses these concerns by requiring the President to make a determination about the extent of Russian assistance to Iran before NASA can make additional payments to the Russian aviation and space agency.

Moreover, the bill holds the Russian government accountable by preventing payments to the Russian Aviation and Space Agency if it or any of the entities for which it is legally responsible are involved in inappropriate technical assistance to Iran. Certainly nobody in this body wants to see U.S. tax dollars inadvertently subsidizing the proliferation of ballistic missiles. H.R. 1883 helps prevent just such a prospect.

While helping curb proliferation, the bill does not jeopardize the safety of our astronauts about the ISS or delay the delivery of the Russian hardware that NASA claims it requires in order to reduce U.S. dependence upon Russia in the space station program. Both of these issues are addressed in narrow and specific exceptions to the bill.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1883 is a sound step to prevent the spread of ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction. It passed the House by a vote of 419 to 0 and the Senate by a vote of 98 to 0. I am proud to have joined the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), the ranking minority member, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. GEJDENSON), and the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) as an original cosponsor of this bill and look forward to the day when the President signs it into law.

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4½ minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN).

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and I want to associate myself with the remarks of the previous speakers on this legislation.

I rise in strong support of H.R. 1883. It gives the President authority to impose sanctions on foreign entities that supply Iran with technologies related to nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and ballistic missiles.

Two weeks ago we saw dramatic evidence of the yearning for change among the Iranian people. Despite ef-

forts by the Council of Guardians to limit the pool of eligible candidates, reformers won an overwhelming majority in the Iranian parliament.

Regrettably, this election landslide will not automatically translate into moderate Iranian policies. Supreme Leader Khomeini and other conservative elements retain control over many institutions, including the securities services. And the intentions of President Khatemi and his reformist allies still are not completely clear.

I would welcome an improvement in U.S.-Iranian relations, but a constructive and peaceful bilateral relationship must be based on Iran's willingness to abandon its quest for weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles, to drop its efforts to disrupt the Middle East peace process, and to improve its dismal human rights record. This legislation focuses on the first of these areas of concern. It goes without saying that an Iran armed with these fearsome weapons would be a serious threat to our allies in the Middle East and eventually the United States itself.

Placing additional sanctions on Iran would have little if any effect, given that the U.S. has maintained a trade embargo on the Islamic Republic since the 1979 revolution. This legislation attempts to get at the problem by authorizing sanctions against foreign entities that continue to supply Iran with advanced technologies.

According to a recent unclassified CIA report covering the first half of 1999, Iran remains, "One of the most active countries seeking to acquire WMD technology from abroad. In doing so, Tehran is attempting to develop an indigenous capability to produce various types of weapons, nuclear, chemical and biological, and their delivery systems. Iran focused its efforts to acquire WMD-related equipment, materials and technology primarily on entities in Russia, China, North Korea, and Western Europe."

The report goes on to say that "entities in Russia and China continue to supply a considerable amount and a wide variety of ballistic missile-related goods and technology to Iran. Tehran is using these goods and technologies to support current production programs and to achieve its goal of becoming self-sufficient in the production of ballistic missiles."

It has additional comments on Iran's program with respect to nuclear weapons, which I will assert in my full statement. But, Mr. Speaker, these facts paint a very troubling picture. They reinforced my view that this legislation and other measures are absolutely necessary to prevent or at a minimum slow down Iranian acquisition of WMD and ballistic missiles.

As the CIA report indicates, Russian entities have been among the worst proliferators to Iran. Some steps have been taken to prevent this technology transfer. Last year Russia passed a new export control law and placed monitors in key aerospace entities. Unfortu-

nately, these modest efforts have not stopped the proliferation.

I find it somewhat ironic that Russia objects so strenuously to U.S. deployment of a limited national missile defense system designed specifically to knock down missiles fired by countries like Iran, Iraq, and North Korea, given that the Russian entities are some of the primary suppliers of missile and WMD technology to those very governments and given that Russia may also be a target of those regimes.

I am not under any illusions that this legislation will solve once and for all the problem of proliferation to Iran, but it is a step in the right direction, and more needs to be done. For example, we should initiate an intensive effort with our allies to develop a more effective multilateral export control regime to keep dangerous technologies out of the hands of anti-western regimes. The current Wassenaar arrangement simply is not up to doing the job.

Last year we passed the Iran Nuclear Nonproliferation Act by a vote of 419 to 0, the Senate passed it by 98 to 0. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the Senate amendments today and sending the legislation on to the President.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY), a senior member of our committee.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and I thank him for his leadership on this important issue.

There is no question the Senate has weakened in effect the strengths of this bill, but it is still very important that we go forward with it. It is still an important piece of legislation.

Here is why. In this legislation we are giving Russia a clear choice. Russia can choose to continue to sell and arm America's deadliest enemies and to sell and arm Israel's deadliest enemies, or they can choose to be a partner in peace and prosperity and democracy with the United States. That is a fair choice for Russia to make.

It is important to make the right decision because we all have a stake in their transition to democracy and to free enterprise as a nation. But it has been disappointing, and I think their conduct has been dangerous for America.

Each year, in effect, Russia erects a tent, and to all within listening distance they proclaim, "Come see the show on improving democracy and freedom in our nation." And each year America is the first in line with billions of dollars to help them make that transition. But each year when we walk inside the tent, it is empty, while out back, behind that tent, Russia is actively and aggressively selling technology and equipment to nations that simply are hateful to the United States and will disrupt the peace process in the Middle East.

I think it is important that no American taxpayer have to finance our deadliest enemies. No veteran ought to be

paying tax dollars so that Russia can arm our enemies. No single mom struggling to make ends meet ought to have her tax dollars going to damage our security. No service members, or members of our military, ought to ever have their dollars be used against them. But, in effect, today they are.

I support this legislation. I support Russia making the right choice, and this choice is long overdue. As a member of the Committee on Science, I appreciate the leadership of the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) in adopting an amendment that I offered preserving the existing relationship with Russia on the space station. That was a very key part of this legislation, and overall this bill deserves our support.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) for his supportive remarks, and I reserve the balance of my time.

1345

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to compliment the Chair of the Committee on International Relations for his leadership on this important issue. I want to thank the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. GEJDENSON), the ranking member, as well, and compliment both gentlemen for working together in a bipartisan fashion on this and so many other issues that bipartisanship serves our committee and this Congress well.

The legislation before us, Mr. Speaker, is an attempt to stem the flow of weapons technology into Iran by authorizing the President to impose sanctions on nations and individuals that provide this weapons technology to Iran.

The sanctions would include the denial of munitions, licenses, arms export, and dual-use licenses, and a halt to any United States foreign assistance.

The bill requires the President to report to Congress when credible information exists of a transfer of dangerous weapons technology to Iran. The President must also report to Congress about whether he has imposed certain penalties on foreign persons as a result of such transfers.

If the penalties are not imposed, the President must expose why those steps were not taken. The bill will also encourage the Russian Space Agency to cooperate with the United States in efforts to halt the proliferation of weapons technology to Iran by cutting off payments to that agency and to the International Space Station if those under its jurisdiction and control engage in such activities.

We are all pleased by the initial reforms that are being made within Iran. Their recent elections give the world some hope that changes are coming. Unfortunately, while there are some encouraging signs, Iran's current policies continue to be a threat to the security of the world.

There are four areas where Iran continues to threaten world peace. In the area of ballistic missiles, with their development of the Shahab missiles, at least one expert has testified to the Senate Armed Services Committee that the Iranians are working on a missile now with a range of 2,600 miles. We know that they have missiles with a range of 1,200 miles and they are pushing ahead with this development.

With nuclear issues, Iran is proceeding with plans to complete the 1,000 megawatt nuclear reactor at Bushehr. While these nuclear plants probably are not able to be used for nuclear weapons purposes, the fear is that Iran will continue to obtain valuable expertise while building these plants that could be transferable to a nuclear weapons program.

In the area of chemical and biological programs, while Iran signed and ratified the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention, the CIA reports that Iran continues to pursue purchasing dual-use biotechnical equipment from Russia and other countries ostensibly for civilian uses. Press reports indicate that they are also hiring Russian scientists.

United States officials have publicly stated that Iran has a large chemical weapons program that has been made possible with the help of China; and Iran and North Korea reportedly have a relationship of exchanging missile technology.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile delivery systems continues to be one of the most significant threats to American national security.

Rogue states like North Korea and Iran are actively pursuing ambitious ballistic missile programs and the technology needed to threaten our country and our allies. Iran's progress in this effort is being helped by the relationships with North Korea, with China, and with Russia.

This legislation is a good first step that will send a signal to those who are aiding Iran that this aid will not be tolerated.

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

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to emphasize again why we are sending this bill on to the President.

Proliferation to Iran is a very serious threat to our Nation. It is one of the biggest threats we face today. Regrettably, entities in Russia and elsewhere have been actively engaged in this kind of proliferation. The bill sends a message, loud and clear, that our Nation cannot and will not do business as usual with such entities.

We hope this legislation will inspire the governments of Russia, of China, and of other countries to do more to stop proliferation to Iran.

North Korea is also a major concern when it comes to proliferation to the Middle East, and we need to take a

good close look at that situation, as well.

I want to assure my colleagues that our committee is going to remain vigilant.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1883, the Iran Nonproliferation Act. Any transfer of technology to Iran that would allow that country to develop weapons of mass destruction would represent a threat to Israel and other allies in the region.

Passage of this measure sends a strong message to the international community. The United States will not be silent or inactive if any nation decides to aid Iran in production of weapons of mass destruction. By making it clear that we will impose sanctions on any authority that fuels Iran's dangerous motives, I hope we will be more successful in our efforts to prevent Iran's development of nuclear weapons.

While the recent strong showing for reformers in Iran's parliamentary elections is encouraging, we still need to be extremely cautious and firm in our dealings with Iran. We must never allow any nation to develop weapons of mass destruction if we believe they may be targeted on our allies or on Americans. It is important to remember that Iran has been the world's largest exporter of terror for some time now and is an ardent opponent of the Middle East peace process. I am pleased to join my colleagues in supporting H.R. 1883 and sending the right message on behalf of all Americans, that we will not allow back-door maneuvers that aid Iran's dangerous plans for terror and destruction.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I speak today in strong support for the amended version of H.R. 1883, the Iran Nonproliferation Act of 1999.

Everyone in Congress is aware that Iran has continually threatened the peace and security of the Middle East. Iran is still committed to the destruction of Israel, opposes the Middle East peace process and supports terrorist groups such as Hamas. In fact, Iran remains the world's leading sponsor of international terrorism.

Despite these very real security concerns, cash strapped Russia has supported the \$800 million Bushehr project, a 1000-megawatt light-water reactor, in southern Iran. Why Iran needs such a reactor remains an open question because Iran has one of the world's largest oil and natural gas reserves. However, many security experts believe that such projects provide good cover to a nuclear weapons program and provide Iranian technicians with expertise in the development of nuclear weapons.

Iran has successfully tested the Shabah-3 missile, which has a range of 800 miles, and has supplied Fajr rockets to Lebanon. These rockets are capable of hitting Haifa, and other parts of Israel. In fact, Iranian weapons supplied to Hamas are used against the Southern Lebanese Army, the Israeli Defense Forces and severely jeopardize the security of communities in Northern Israel.

Iran's support of international terrorism poses a great risk to the Middle East and shows very clearly that Iran remains a threat to U.S. interests in the region. The results of an Iran armed with nuclear weapons are almost too horrifying to imagine. But, if current trends continue, it may become an all too real

nightmare for the United States and our Middle Eastern allies.

While I welcome the results of the recent parliamentary elections in Iran, I believe that we must wait and see if the victory of the reformists will translate into any real change. Before we start to re-evaluate our policy, Iran needs to drastically change theirs, especially in areas of major concern to the U.S., such as non-conventional weaponry and the support of terrorism. H.R. 1883 reinforces those Congressional concerns and sends a clear message to countries that assist Iran's weapons program.

I was proud to be an original cosponsor of the Iran Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act of 1999, and I am proud to be a cosponsor of the Iran Nonproliferation Act.

Mr. Speaker, the Senate passed the amended Iran Nonproliferation Act, 98–0, last week and I urge my fellow Members to give this legislation the same overwhelming support on the floor today.

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I want to express my strong support for passage of the Senate amendments to the Iran Nonproliferation Act. Last week, this important legislation was approved by the Senate by 98 to 0. H.R. 1883 was originally approved by the House in September 1999.

This important legislation gives the President the authority to impose sanctions against Russia or any other nation for supplying Iran with the technology to build missiles and chemical and biological weapons. The Iran Nonproliferation Act also provides for biannual reports on who around the world is transferring prohibited technology or information to Iran, and allows the President to take action against persons or entities found to be engaged in such activity.

This bill also includes new steps to ensure the Russian Space Agency, which is a partner with NASA in the International Space Station project, is complying with Russia's official Iran anti-proliferation policy. If needed, the President is granted the authority to cut-off funds for the remaining payment of \$590 million to the Russian Space Agency for helping the U.S. build the International Space Station. As much as we want to continue to work with Russia on joint efforts in space, we will not do so if they are contributing to this grave threat to our security. That said, the language as amended is much more workable in ensuring that the ISS moves forward.

The threat is a very real and serious security concern for the United States and Israel, our nation's most-trusted ally in the Middle East. The CIA has reported Iran has the capability to launch a missile that will reach Israel, and it is well known that Iran is pursuing development of nuclear, chemical and biological weaponry. This legislation provides the Administration with useful tools to combat the spread of dangerous weapons technology and to discourage nuclear proliferation. H.R. 1883 also demonstrates our commitment to prevent the proliferation of dangerous nuclear weapons to countries that threaten our national security as well as the security of allies—such as Israel and Europe.

The U.S. support for Israel must go beyond economic and military aid to Israel—it must meet the very real challenges that will face Israel and the United States in this new century, such as limiting the threats of weapons of mass destruction. It is well documented that

technology provided to Iran increases its ability to develop its own intermediate range ballistic missile that is capable of reaching Israel as well as our European allies. By limiting Iran's access to such technology we can better protect these countries as well as our own troops in the Middle East and Europe.

The people of Iran demonstrated in their recent elections an overriding desire to move toward reform and moderation in the future—but it is too early to tell what this change will mean in practice. I hope that it is a sign that Iran will end its missile program and its support for international terrorism. This legislation also sends a strong message to Russia that U.S. aid and scientific collaboration will be limited if Russia doesn't stop missile proliferation to Iran. U.S. funding will be substantially limited unless the President certifies that the Russian Space Agency is not transferring technology to Iran. Acting Russian President Vladimir Putin has been receptive to restricting companies that sell missile technology and equipment to Iran. I hope his intentions are translated into action. Otherwise, our cooperation with Russia—both in space and elsewhere—may end.

We live in a dangerous world—where terrorists and rogue nations are developing deadly weapons of mass destruction. Our action today will send a clear message to our allies and to our adversaries. By supporting this bipartisan legislation, we will demonstrate our commitment to limit nuclear proliferation and to create a safer, more stable world.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Pursuant to the order of the House today, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN).

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 420, nays 0, not voting 14, as follows:

[Roll No. 28]

YEAS—420

Abercrombie	Bartlett	Boehlert
Ackerman	Barton	Boehner
Aderholt	Bass	Bonilla
Allen	Bateman	Bonior
Andrews	Becerra	Bono
Archer	Bentsen	Borski
Armey	Bereuter	Boswell
Baca	Berkley	Boucher
Bachus	Berman	Boyd
Baird	Berry	Brady (PA)
Baker	Biggart	Brady (TX)
Baldacci	Bilbray	Brown (FL)
Baldwin	Billirakis	Bryant
Ballenger	Bishop	Burr
Barcia	Blagojevich	Burton
Barr	Bliley	Buyer
Barrett (NE)	Blumenauer	Callahan
Barrett (WI)	Blunt	Calvert
Camp	Hall (OH)	Meek (FL)
Canady	Hansen	Meeks (NY)
Cannon	Hastings (FL)	Menendez
Capps	Hastings (WA)	Metcalf
Capuano	Hayes	Mica
Cardin	Hayworth	Miller (FL)
Carson	Hefley	Miller, Gary
Castle	Herger	Miller, George
Chabot	Hill (IN)	Minge
Chambliss	Hill (MT)	Mink
Chenoweth-Hage	Hilleary	Moakley
Clay	Hilliard	Mollohan
Clayton	Hinchee	Moore
Clement	Hinojosa	Moran (KS)
Clyburn	Hobson	Moran (VA)
Coble	Hoefel	Morella
Coburn	Hoekstra	Murtha
Collins	Holden	Myrick
Combest	Holt	Nadler
Condit	Hoolley	Napolitano
Conyers	Horn	Neal
Cooksey	Hostettler	Nethercutt
Costello	Houghton	Ney
Cox	Hoyer	Northup
Coyne	Hulshof	Nussle
Cramer	Hunter	Oberstar
Crane	Hutchinson	Obey
Crowley	Hyde	Olver
Cubin	Inslee	Ortiz
Cummings	Isakson	Ose
Cunningham	Istook	Owens
Danner	Jackson (IL)	Oxley
Davis (FL)	Jackson-Lee	Packard
Davis (IL)	(TX)	Pallone
Davis (VA)	Jefferson	Pascrell
Deal	Jenkins	Pastor
DeFazio	John	Payne
DeGette	Johnson (CT)	Pease
Delahunt	Johnson, E.B.	Pelosi
DeLauro	Johnson, Sam	Peterson (MN)
DeLay	Jones (NC)	Peterson (PA)
DeMint	Jones (OH)	Petri
Deutsch	Kanjorski	Phelps
Diaz-Balart	Kaptur	Pickering
Dickey	Kasich	Pickett
Dicks	Kelly	Pitts
Dixon	Kennedy	Pombo
Doggett	Kildee	Pomeroy
Dooley	Kind (WI)	Porter
Doolittle	King (NY)	Portman
Doyle	Kingston	Price (NC)
Dreier	Klink	Pryce (OH)
Duncan	Knollenberg	Quinn
Dunn	Kolbe	Radanovich
Edwards	Kucinich	Rahall
Ehlers	Kuykendall	Ramstad
Ehrlich	LaFalce	Rangel
Emerson	LaHood	Regula
Engel	Lampson	Reyes
English	Lantos	Reynolds
Eshoo	Largent	Riley
Etheridge	Latham	Rivers
Evans	LaTourette	Rodriguez
Everett	Lazio	Roemer
Ewing	Leach	Rogan
Farr	Lee	Rogers
Fattah	Levin	Rohrabacher
Filner	Lewis (CA)	Ros-Lehtinen
Fletcher	Lewis (GA)	Rothman
Foley	Lewis (KY)	Roukema
Forbes	Linder	Roybal-Allard
Ford	Lipinski	Royce
Fossella	LoBiondo	Rush
Frank (MA)	Lofgren	Ryan (WI)
Franks (NJ)	Lowey	Ryan (KS)
Frelinghuysen	Lucas (KY)	Sabo
Frost	Lucas (OK)	Salmon
Gallely	Luther	Sanchez
Ganske	Maloney (CT)	Sanders
Gejdenson	Maloney (NY)	Sandlin
Gekas	Manzullo	Sanford
Gephardt	Markey	Sawyer
Gibbons	Martinez	Saxton
Gilchrest	Mascara	Scarborough
Gillmor	Matsui	Schaffer
Gilman	McCarthy (MO)	Schakowsky
Gonzalez	McCarthy (NY)	Scott
Goode	McCollum	Sensenbrenner
Goodlatte	McCrery	Serrano
Goodling	McDermott	Sessions
Gordon	McGovern	Shadegg
Goss	McHugh	Shaw
Graham	McInnis	Shays
Granger	McIntosh	Sherman
Green (TX)	McIntyre	Sherwood
Green (WI)	McKeon	Shimkus
Greenwood	McKinney	Shows
Gutierrez	McNulty	Shuster
Gutknecht	Meehan	Simpson

Sisisky	Tauscher	Walsh
Skeen	Tauzin	Wamp
Skelton	Taylor (MS)	Watkins
Slaughter	Taylor (NC)	Watt (NC)
Smith (MI)	Terry	Watts (OK)
Smith (NJ)	Thomas	Waxman
Smith (TX)	Thompson (CA)	Weiner
Smith (WA)	Thompson (MS)	Weldon (FL)
Snyder	Thornberry	Weldon (PA)
Souder	Thune	Weller
Spence	Thurman	Wexler
Spratt	Tiahrt	Weygand
Stabenow	Tierney	Whitfield
Stark	Toomey	Wicker
Stearns	Towns	Wilson
Stenholm	Traficant	Wise
Strickland	Turner	Wolf
Stump	Udall (CO)	Woolsey
Stupak	Udall (NM)	Wu
Sununu	Upton	Wynn
Sweeney	Velazquez	Young (AK)
Talent	Visclosky	Young (FL)
Tancredo	Vitter	
Tanner	Walden	

NOT VOTING—14

Brown (OH)	Kilpatrick	Paul
Campbell	Klecicka	Vento
Cook	Larson	Waters
Dingell	Millender-	
Fowler	McDonald	
Hall (TX)	Norwood	

1413

So the motion was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. NORWOOD. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 28, I was unavoidably detained and, had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I was not present for rollcall votes No. 27 and No. 28 because I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on both counts.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1304

Mr. DELAHUNT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 1304.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

1415

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

(Mr. MOAKLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I take this time in order to inquire about the next week's schedule.

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield, I am pleased to announce that we have completed legislative business for the week. There will be no recorded votes on Thursday or Friday of this week.

The House will next meet for legislative business on Wednesday, March 8, at 10 a.m. We will consider a number of bills under suspension of the rules, a list of which will be distributed to Members' offices later this week.

The House will also consider H.R. 1827, the Government Waste Corrections Act, under an open rule. On Wednesday we do not expect recorded votes until 2 o'clock p.m.

On Thursday, March 9, and Friday, March 10, the House will consider the following measures, all of which will be subject to a rule: The Small Business Tax Fairness and Minimum Wage Legislation; and H.R. 1695, the Ivanpah Valley Airport Public Lands Transfer Act.

Mr. Speaker, conferees report they are making progress on the conference report accompanying S. 376, the Communications Satellite Competition and Privatization Act. I am hopeful that it will be ready for consideration in the House at some point next week.

Mr. Speaker, I wish all of my colleagues safe travel back to their districts.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, does the gentleman expect the minimum wage legislation to be completed on Thursday next?

Mr. COX. We do expect it, certainly, to come up; and we hope to be completed on Thursday.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Also, I thank the gentleman for saying there will not be any votes until 2 o'clock on Wednesday, but Members in your part of the country would really appreciate it if you could hold back those votes until at least 5 or 6 o'clock on Wednesday next.

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield further, Tuesday is the only day we have not had votes on a primary day, and that is an important accommodation that as a California Member I am pleased is being made. We, of course, have our primary on Tuesday. I am in a position of traveling back that day myself, on Wednesday. So I know that every accommodation that can be made will be made for Members on the West Coast. Two o'clock is currently the schedule; but of course I understand the pressures that puts on travel, because I myself will not be able to be back here until 5 o'clock.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Further, Mr. Speaker, that minimum wage legislation, is that going to be contained within one piece of legislation, or will it be two bills?

Mr. COX. There will be two separate bills, which it is my understanding will be enrolled together if both are successful.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Will the Democrats have a substitute on both of these bills?

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Rules has yet to meet on that point.

Mr. MOAKLEY. I understand that. Is the gentleman's leadership allowing the substitute on each of these bills?

Mr. COX. The Committee on Rules is going to be meeting on Wednesday for that purpose, and I am sure that is the very topic they will consider.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 425 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 425

Resolved, That it shall be in order at any time on the legislative day of Wednesday, March 8, 2000, for the Speaker to entertain motions to suspend the rules. The Speaker or his designee shall consult with the Minority Leader or his designee on the designation of any matter for consideration pursuant to this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). The gentleman from New York (Mr. REYNOLDS) is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MOAKLEY), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

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

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, this rule makes in order at any time on Wednesday, March 8, 2000, for the Speaker to entertain motions that the House suspend rules. The rule further requires the Speaker or his designee to consult with the minority leader or his designee on the designation of any matter for consideration pursuant to the rule.

As my colleagues are aware, clause 1 of House rule XXVII allows the Speaker to entertain motions to suspend the rules on Mondays and Tuesdays. Since the House will not conduct legislative business on either of those days, this will allow us to begin the legislative workweek in normal fashion.

This is a non-controversial rule. There are no surprises, and it requires consultation with the minority, so I hope we can move expeditiously to pass this rule.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I thank my dear friend, the gentleman from New York (Mr. REYNOLDS), for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I do not object to this rule making next Wednesday a suspension day. Normally, the House takes up suspension bills on Mondays and Tuesdays; but next Tuesday is Super Tuesday, which pushes the House schedule back. So, Mr. Speaker, as my colleague from New York has explained, this rule will make next Wednesday a suspension day as well. That way we can quickly debate and vote out relatively non-controversial bills.

As long as my Republican colleagues hold the proper consultations on the

suspension bills and no last minute surprises are added, I support this rule; and I encourage my colleagues to do so as well.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, assuring the gentleman that there are no surprises, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous questions was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ADJOURNMENT FROM THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 2000, TO MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2000

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns on Thursday, March 2, 2000, it adjourn to meet at 2 p.m. on Monday, March 6, 2000.

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

There was no objection.

ADJOURNMENT FROM MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2000, TO WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2000

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns on Monday, March 6, 2000, it adjourn to meet at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, March 8, 2000.

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

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. REYNOLDS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday Rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

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

There was no objection.

WELCOMING THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS TO INDIANAPOLIS

(Ms. CARSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome the National Federation of State High School Associations to their new home in Indianapolis.

The federation was started in 1920 by educators dedicated to the development of young people, and it promotes

participation in sportsmanship with the goal of developing good citizens through interscholastic activities.

Through participation in these activities, young people gain the skills necessary to succeed in life. Skills like teamwork, respect for themselves and others, dedication to their communities, and pride in a job well done.

I am very privileged to have the National Federation of State High School Associations in their new home in my Congressional District in Indianapolis.

The Federation writes playing rules and coordinates the administration of high school sports and activities in the United States. Their mission is to provide the necessary leadership to enhance the educational experiences of high school students and reduce the risks of their participation.

The Federation was started in 1920 by educators dedicated to the development of young people as productive citizens in our nation through the medium of activities. It provides essential services to the nation's 18,000 high schools.

Each year, more than 6,500,000 young people participate in high school sports, and another 4,000,000 participate in the fine arts programs of speech, debate and music. The Federation publishes playing rules in 16 sports for boys and girls competition and provides programs and services that its member state associations can and do utilize in all 50 states.

The Federation seeks to provide equitable opportunities, positive recognition and learning experiences to students while maximizing the achievement of educational goals. After school programs also go a long way in the physical and emotional development of our nation's youth.

Through their annual sponsorship of National Student-Athlete Day, the Federation has helped to recognize more than 500,000 students nationwide not only for excellence in athletic achievement but academic achievement excellence and community service as well.

The Department of Health and Human Services has documented that participation in extracurricular activities reduces dropout rates, diminishes the rates of drug abuse and teen pregnancy, and enhances academic performance. Time and time again we hear about the increase in teenage crime between the hours of 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. I strongly support the goals of the Federation in their attempts to provide an alternative for our nation's youth to work at something productive rather than something destructive.

Interscholastic activities are a part of the educational curriculum and experience in our schools and must always remain as such. The responsibility of retaining their place as an integral part of the educational process of young people rests with the Federation. I am proud that the National High School Federation, like the NCAA before it, has chosen Indianapolis as its new home. I look forward to working closely with them to increase the extra-curricular opportunities for our nation's high school students.

Indianapolis is a great city for amateur and professional sports, and we will help the Federation continue its fine work on behalf of our nation's young people.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to move up on the list and insert my name in the place of the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON).

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

There was no objection.

DEALING WITH DRUG PROBLEMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, I read with concern this week that we have had another incident on our southern border in Tijuana with Mexico and their inability to get control of the drug problem. The attorney general of Mexico was quoted, who has been a crusader in trying to establish law and order in Mexico on the drug issue, that one of our primary needs is to get control of consumption in this country.

I want to suggest two different things: in addition, Mexico needs to continue to work to control the borders, because in San Diego, I will be at a hearing next week that the gentleman from California (Mr. MICA) is chairing in the district of the gentleman from California (Mr. BILBRAY). There is only so much they can do in San Diego, across from Tijuana if we do not get some control of our borders.

There is also only so much we can do in northeast Indiana, as I have talked with Sheriff Dukes in Noble County and Sheriff Jackson in Huntington County and Sheriff Herman in Allen County. There is only so much they can do in my district if the drugs keep coming across in California and Arizona and New Mexico and Texas that pour then into Indiana.

So we need Mexico's continued help, and we need even more aggressive efforts to try to crack down on the drug problem.

But I would suggest there are two other things that we will be addressing in this House before too long: one is the Colombia Plan, or better referred to as the Andes Region Plan. Clearly Colombia is in deep trouble. Clearly the cocaine and heroin that is pouring into our country through Mexico and corrupting Mexico is coming originally out of Colombia for the most part.

We need to do whatever we can to help the brave people on the ground in Colombia who are fighting the narco-traffic thugs, whether they be FARC or whether they be others, in Colombia;

and we need to be able to pass that passage through this House and through this Senate and get it signed by the President as soon as possible, because we cannot get control in the demand reduction side if the price keeps going down, if the purity goes up, and the supply is coming in the way it is.

Secondly, as we address the Safe and Drugfree Schools Act and as we look at other acts in Congress, we need to make sure that we do not so water down our prevention programs in this country that they no longer have the antidrug bite in them. If we water these things down so much it becomes kind of a feel-good type of program rather than an accountability program, such as making sure we push drug testing and other methods of accountability. Rather than just talk, countries like Mexico and Colombia have a somewhat legitimate gripe, that we are always pointing the finger at them while we are consuming all this and not doing anything domestically.

Another problem that I will be soon meeting with the Department of Education about is an amendment that former Congressman Solomon and I passed on the student loans that said if you are convicted of a drug offense, you lose your loan for 1 year. If you are convicted a second time after you come back in, you lose it for 2 years, and a third time and you are out.

The Department of Education has put out a form that over 100,000, probably 150,000 students, did not even check.

We need to take aggressive action to make sure that those students who did not check that cannot get their loan if they do not check that box. Furthermore, we need a random sampling procedure to make sure that they are actually telling the truth, that the Department of Education partly in my opinion as a gutting process said this applied to everybody in all their years prior to going to college.

This was an accountability provision, not before you went to college. But once you take a student loan, we expect you to be clean, because you cannot be learning if you are on drugs. You cannot be exercising your responsibility if we give you a subsidized loan and then you are on drugs.

I also had an amendment that said if you test clean twice during that process of your first suspension, you can get your loan back. I believe education is critical. But if we are really committed in this country, forget about just talking about Mexico or Colombia or Panama or Peru or Bolivia, if we are committed in this country and we really care about our kids and we care about the violence in the streets and violence in the families, we need to take some serious steps in this Congress to put some accountability at the high school level, at the elementary school level, at the college level and at the adult level, and put some dollars as well as some restrictions behind it.

TRAGEDY IN MOUNT MORRIS TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Indiana (Ms. CARSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CARSON. Mr. Speaker, I speak today about the devastating tragedy in Mount Morris Township, Michigan, at Buell Elementary School, where a 6-year-old girl was shot and killed by a 6-year-old schoolmate. My thoughts and prayers go out to the families and to the schools and to the communities in this very devastating period of their lives.

1430

Gun violence is an invasive problem within our society, with children often becoming the victims, perpetuated, unfortunately, by children. Unfortunately, the tragedy in Michigan is not the first. We have all too often witnessed horrific school violence throughout the Nation, tragic stories of children being killed in schools in West Paducah, Kentucky; Jonesboro, Arkansas; Littleton, Colorado; and now in Mount Morris township, Michigan.

We have been shown that Americans are devastated by the impact that gun violence has on our children. Nearly 12 children die each day from gunfire in America, approximately one every two hours. That is equivalent to a classroom of children every 2 days. Gun violence is an equal opportunity disaster. Of the nearly 80,000 children killed by gunfire since 1979, 61 percent were white and 36 percent were black.

The National School Boards Association estimates that more than 135 guns are brought into the U.S. schools each day. Ten percent of all public schools experienced one or more serious crimes such as murder, rape, suicide, physical attack with a weapon, or robbery during the 1996-1997 school year that were reported to law enforcement.

Within my district, Indianapolis, Indiana's Tenth Congressional District, guns were confiscated on the Indianapolis public school property in 14 separate incidents. In December in Indianapolis, a 7th grader shot an eighth grader while riding a bus home from school.

I am outraged and saddened by the school violence that invades our schools, our communities, and our homes. Schools should be a safe haven for children to learn and to thrive and grow, where violence is not a fear for our children.

The bill that I introduced, H.R. 515, the Child Handgun Injury Prevention Act, which is a bill to prevent children from injuring themselves with handguns, requires child safety devices on handguns, and establishes standards and testing procedures for those devices. It does not describe specifically what kind of safety device, but it does, indeed, ask for a safety device.

At present it has only 66 cosponsors, not nearly enough. I would encourage my colleagues to rise to the challenge,

avoid the resistance from anti-gun control lobbying advocates, take a strong stance against violence in our schools, and stand up for our children.

Promoting strong child handgun prevention legislation is not only the right thing to do; indeed, it is the moral thing to do.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DIAZ-BALART addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks)

GUN SAFETY AND THE CONSTITUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to associate myself with the remarks of the gentlewoman from Indiana.

Mr. Speaker, I rise on the floor of the House today to offer my sympathies for those who are now in danger in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, held hostage, at least as of the last notice that we received, by someone holding innocent individuals hostage with a gun. Several of these individuals have been shot, and that area is in crisis.

Additionally, of course, yesterday I think America got either a wake-up call or one of the most shocking exposures to gun violence that we have had I would say in the last 20 years, even as we watched the little, small children run to safety in California with a crazed gunman at the Jewish Community Center, a hateful act with a gun.

But here we find in Michigan that it was not an adult, it was not a 15-year-old, it was not a teenager, an adolescent, but it was a 6-year-old little boy that shot a little girl in the neck with a gun that apparently he secured from his home, a home that, as news reports have indicated, was not the best and most supportive situation for a child.

Without commenting on the support system that that family needs and the crisis and the ultimate criminal procedures that will follow, or whether or not there will be indictments of those parents, and what will happen in this situation in Pittsburgh, the question has to come, what now, America? What will this Congress do? What have we delayed in doing?

I can tell the Members that as a member of the Committee on the Judiciary and a member of the conference

committee set up last year, 1999, to deal with gun safety and juvenile justice, we have yet to have another meeting. The first meeting ended with disagreement and opening statements, but no action.

I would commend to my colleagues, for those who argue vigorously about the privileges of the Constitution in the second amendment, I would argue for them to understand the Constitution as a living document.

The Second Amendment was drafted and promoted at a time that this was an embryonic country. It was a beginning Nation. It was a Nation that feared to be taken over by those who had once been its colonizer, if you will. The Second Amendment related to a well-armed militia. I have no problem with people legally retaining their guns in their homes, but I do have a problem with criminals getting guns.

It is tragic that the House conference committee has not seen fit to meet and to deal with what America wants us to do: one, reasonable, safe gun safety laws; two, to close the loopholes so criminals do not get guns, so a little baby 6 years old does not have the opportunity, in a home that may not be the best, that may have a criminal element, to access a gun.

Mr. Speaker, it is extremely tragic that we would have a situation where a child accessed a gun. What can we say about that, other than that we have not done our job? We must do our job. We must pass safety legislation that deals with trigger locks, that deals with smart guns, and we must find a way to convene and do what America desires us to do.

How many more killings will we see? How many more of those who are either deranged, needing mental assistance? How many more persons will we have suffering and losing their lives because we have not done our job?

Mr. Speaker, I think that in this instance all we can do is pray, but I think that what we can do in the future is to meet, and to be assured that as we meet, we have this committee that will find itself in its heart and in its mind to pass real gun safety legislation so that a 6-year-old does not have access to guns.

Mr. Speaker, to conclude my remarks, let me say that I hope that the conference committee will find its way to meet. If it meets, I hope we will find our way to vote for real gun safety legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MINK of Hawaii addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks)

INTRODUCING LEGISLATION CALLING FOR THE UNITED STATES TO WITHDRAW FROM THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce my introduction of and request cosponsors for a privileged resolution to withdraw the United States from the World Trade Organization.

Last week, the Wall Street Journal reported that the United States was dealt a defeat in a tax dispute with the European Union by an unelected board of international bureaucrats. It seems that, according to the WTO, \$2.2 billion of United States tax reductions for American businesses violates WTO's rules and must be eliminated by October 1 of this year.

Much could be said about the WTO's mistaken Orwellian notion that allowing citizens to retain the fruits of their own labor constitutes subsidies and corporate welfare. However, we need not even reach the substance of this particular dispute prior to asking, by what authority does the World Trade Organization assume jurisdiction over the United States Federal tax policy? That is the question.

At last reading, the Constitution required that all appropriation bills originate in the House, and specified that only Congress has the power to lay and collect taxes. Taxation without representation was a predominant reason for America's fight for independence during the American Revolution. Yet, now we face an unconstitutional delegation of taxing authority to an unelected body of international bureaucrats.

Let me assure Members that this Nation does not need yet another bureaucratic hurdle to tax reduction. Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution reserves to Congress alone the authority for regulating foreign commerce. According to Article II, section 2, it reserves to the Senate the sole power to ratify agreements, namely, treaties, between the United States government and other governments.

We all saw the recent demonstrations at the World Trade Organization meetings in Seattle. Although many of those folks who were protesting were indeed rallying against what they see as evils of free trade and capitalist markets, the real problem when it comes to the World Trade Organization is not free trade. The World Trade Organization is the furthest thing from free trade.

Instead, it is an egregious attack upon our national sovereignty, and this is the reason why we must vigorously oppose it. No Nation can maintain its sovereignty if it surrenders its authority to an international collective. Since sovereignty is linked so closely to freedom, our very notion of American liberty is at stake in this issue.

Let us face it, free trade means trade without interference from govern-

mental or quasi-governmental agencies. The World Trade Organization is a quasi-governmental agency, and hence, it is not accurate to describe it as a vehicle of free trade. Let us call a spade a spade: the World Trade Organization is nothing other than a vehicle for managed trade whereby the politically connected get the benefits of exercising their position as a preferred group; preferred, that is, by the Washington and international political and bureaucratic establishments.

As a representative of the people of the 14th District of Texas and a Member of the United States Congress sworn to uphold the Constitution of this country, it is not my business to tell other countries whether or not they should be in the World Trade Organization. They can toss their own sovereignty out the window if they choose. I cannot tell China or Britain or anybody else that they should or should not join the World Trade Organization. That is not my constitutional role.

I can, however, say that the United States of America ought to withdraw its membership and funding from the WTO immediately.

We need to better explain that the Founding Fathers believed that tariffs were meant to raise revenues, not to erect trade barriers. American colonists even before the war for independence understood the difference.

When our Founding Fathers drafted the Constitution, they placed the treaty-making authority with the President and the Senate, but the authority to regulate commerce with the House. The effects of this are obvious. The Founders left us with a system that made no room for agreements regarding international trade; hence, our Nation was to be governed not by protection, but rather, by market principles. Trade barriers were not to be erected, period.

A revenue tariff was to be a major contributor to the U.S. Treasury, but only to fund the limited and constitutionally authorized responsibilities of the Federal government. Thus, the tariff would be low.

The colonists and Founders clearly recognized that these are tariffs or taxes on American consumers, they are not truly taxes on foreign corporations. This realization was made obvious by the British government's regulation of trade with the colonies, but it is a realization that has apparently been lost by today's protectionists.

Simply, protectionists seem to fail even to realize that raising the tariff is a tax hike on the American people.

OIL PIPELINE SAFETY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. METCALF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, oil and gas pipeline accidents happen more often than we might think. Just within

the past few weeks, two major pipeline spills have occurred.

On February 5, an oil pipeline spilled approximately 70,000 gallons of crude oil into a lake in the John Heinz Wildlife Refuge near Philadelphia. The refuge incorporates the largest freshwater tidal marsh in the State and is habitat to two endangered species.

On January 27, approximately 500,000 gallons of oil leaked from a pipeline near Winchester, Kentucky. Officials are unsure how much of the oil will make its way into the Kentucky River, the main drinking water source for Lexington and other towns.

Thankfully, neither of these spills were ignited, like the spill which occurred in my district last June. The accident in my district resulted in three deaths, millions of dollars in property damage. How many more spills do we need to have before we act to improve our system of pipeline safety?

Recently, I introduced H.R. 3558, the Safe Pipelines Act of 2000. My bipartisan bill, which has been cosponsored by the entire Washington State House delegation, will enact much needed reforms to our Federal pipeline regulations, and will give the States a role in pipeline regulation, which they currently lack.

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Under my bill, pipelines will be required to be inspected both internally and with hydrostatic tests. Pipelines with a history of leaks will be specially targeted for more strenuous testing. All pipeline operators will be tested for qualifications and certified by the Department of Transportation.

The results of pipeline tests and inspections will be made available to the public and a nationwide map of all pipeline locations will be placed on the Internet where every citizen can easily access it. All pipeline ruptures and spills of more than 40 gallons will be reported to the Federal Office of Pipeline Safety and States will be able to set up their own pipeline safety programs for interstate pipelines, provided that the States have the resources and expertise necessary to carry out the programs and that State standards are at least as stringent as Federal standards.

In addition, the bill requires studies on a variety of technologies that may improve safety such as external leak detection systems and double-walled pipelines. I urge my colleagues to join with me in support of this bipartisan legislation.

CONGRATULATIONS TO WALTER CRYAN UPON HIS RETIREMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. WEYGAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WEYGAND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to stress my congratulations and sincere thanks to a good friend, Walter

Cryan, who is retiring from a 35-year career in broadcast journalism. Walter will be deeply missed. This great man, whom we have watched as anchor on Channel 12 for the last 35 years, will be missed because we know that the kind of journalism that he represents is not the norm today.

Walter Cryan heard the call of the media at a very early age. As a child growing up in Cambridge and Lowell, Massachusetts, a young Walter was enraptured by the world of radio and displayed a particular love for the Lone Ranger. At this time he was also exposed to journalistic greats such as Walter Winchell and Edward R. Murrow, who would undoubtedly influence his later career, though at the time he actually preferred the world of sports-casting.

With dreams of becoming a baseball announcer, Walter enrolled in the Leland Powers School of Radio and Television in Boston and later transferred to Boston University. After being drafted in the Army in 1952, Walter was stationed in Germany where he served as a broadcaster for the Armed Services Network.

Upon his return to the United States, Walter completed his communications degree and embarked upon a career that would eventually make him one of the most respected journalists in our State. After spending several years with a Massachusetts radio station, Walter made a decision that would shape the remainder of his life. With his wife's encouragement, he took a chance, and a pay cut, to move to Rhode Island in 1965 to pursue a position at WPRO Radio, which also happened to own Channel 12, a television station.

One year later, he was tapped as station anchor on the 11 p.m. news; and in 1967, he was tapped to be the 6 p.m. anchor, where he would remain for the next 33 years. With his straightforward reporting style and his dignified presence, he quickly developed into a Rhode Island favorite amongst all viewers.

Mr. Speaker, Rhode Island is not a large State; with a population of only a million people within about 1,200 square miles, the entire State has only one local affiliate for each of the network stations. And for this reason, though, our local nightly news anchors are particularly well known and recognized just as Peter Jennings, Tom Brokaw, and Dan Rather.

From his anchor desk, Walter Cryan has succeeded admirably in becoming a reliable and respected source of news in our State. His sincere demeanor and his warm personality contribute to his ability to relate to the viewers at home, which inspires a great deal of trust in all who watch this wonderful anchorman.

In times of prosperity and turmoil, of joy and despair, Walter has remained a steady presence at the anchor desk of Channel 12 news.

In 1996, the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences recognized Walter's

service to the southeastern New England area by inducting him into the Silver Circle, a prestigious award given only to those who have served more than 25 years in the broadcasting industry.

One of Walter's greatest assets that he brings to his work is his great sense of perspective. The arrival of cable television and the Internet have caused the network ratings, especially in news broadcasts, to decline over recent years. In an attempt to attract more viewers, many network news programs have added more sensational reporting and entertainment type of news, a style very different from the days of Edward R. Murrow or Walter's youth.

Walter held a place for himself in the news media wonderland by maintaining his professional demeanor and his no-nonsense style of reporting. He carved a unique niche in Rhode Island media by displaying a remarkable understanding of why certain events occur and how they impact the public.

As a person, he has witnessed riots and war, deaths of public figures, economic booms and busts, countless elections and moments essential to our State's history. He has been always able to explain not only the news, but truly their significance to the people.

But there is also another side of Walter Cryan, a side that is certainly more sincere and dedicated and really shows the warm side of Walter Cryan. Walter has highlighted the cause of a facility, an institution known as Meeting Street Center, a Providence organization that assists special needs handicapped children. For the last 22 years, Walter has been an active advocate and a vocal advocate of this organization and he annually hosts their fund-raising telethon which has raised over \$4 million during his time.

During his telethons, he highlights extraordinary advances of the children at Meeting Street Center, how they have moved forward, the things they have done. Rhode Islanders have witnessed, live on TV sometimes, the first steps and the lives of these remarkable children.

Mr. Speaker, I end by saying that Walter Cryan has not only been a tremendous journalist for our State, a person who represents sensitivity and determination to his profession, but he has been a great family man dedicated to our community, to public service in the finest of ways. He is a great guy, and we are going to miss him dearly.

THE KEEP OUR PROMISES TO AMERICA'S MILITARY RETIREES ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. NORWOOD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. NORWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address an issue that is of great importance to me and I hope to my colleagues: The health and well-being of the brave men and women who

dedicated their lives to the military service of our country.

I am extremely proud of the overwhelming bipartisan support of H.R. 3573, the Promises Act, that I had the honor of introducing with my friend from the other side of the aisle, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. SHOWS). I am confident that we will soon have over 300 cosponsors, because most of my colleagues realize that this is the right thing to do.

However, Mr. Speaker, one thing that disturbs me greatly is the red herring that opponents of this bill keep throwing up with costs. How much will it cost? Where will the money come from? Will it break the caps? Well, that is not the point. The point is that we made a promise to these men and women and we have a moral obligation to keep that promise.

We have our priorities backwards in this country sometimes. We should not be scrounging leftovers to find the money to fund health care for the men and women who dedicated their lives in the defense of this country. We should fund that first, then decide what to do with whatever is left over. That is the right and the honorable thing to do.

That is what we should be doing as a Congress. However, Mr. Speaker, if my colleagues want offsets, I will give them offsets. Our own Committee on the Budget released a report saying that we waste \$19 billion annually on major government programs. Mr. Speaker, cut that in half and we could pay for all the health care we need for our military retirees, and then some.

Furthermore, the projected surplus over the next 10 years may be \$10 trillion. This bill would cost less than 5 percent of that amount. Mr. Speaker, the money is out there; we just have to make a commitment to make it happen. Do not tell me it cannot be done. Of course it can be done. These men and women are dying at the rate of 1,000 per day, and it must be done and done soon.

I urge the House and Senate leadership, the Committee on the Budget, the Committee on Ways and Means, Committee on Appropriations, Committee on Government Reform, and the Armed Services Committee to put their heads together and pass this bill this year.

Mr. Speaker, during World War II the famous Big Red One had a motto: "The difficult we do immediately, the impossible takes just a little longer."

We need some of that can-do attitude here and now in this Congress. We need to buckle down and do the right thing and keep our promises to the patriots of this country. We ask a lot from our veterans and our retirees. The least we can do is do for them what we told them we would do.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor of the House this evening to salute the women of this country on the first day of National Women's History Month. This year is particularly special because it marks the 20th anniversary of the National Women's History Project.

In my heart and in my mind this occasion is unique because Sonoma County, in my district, is the birthplace of the National Women's History Project, the organization responsible for the establishment of Women's History Month. This year's theme is "An Extraordinary Century for Women—Now Imagine the Future."

The Project, as it is known, is a non-profit educational organization founded in 1980 and committed to providing education and resources to recognize and celebrate women's diverse lives and historic contributions to society.

The Project is repeatedly cited by educators, publishers, and journalists as the national resource for information on United States women's history. Thanks to the Project's efforts, every March, boys and girls across the country recognize and learn about women's struggles and contributions in science, in literature, business, politics, and in every other endeavor.

As recently as the 1970s, however, Mr. Speaker, women's history was virtually unknown, left out of school books, left out of classroom curriculum.

In 1978, I was the Chair of the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women. At that time all of us involved in the commission were astounded by the lack of focus on women. Because of that, we worked together with local women to push for awareness. Under the leadership of the chair of the commission that followed right after me, Mary Ruthsdotter, a group of hard-working women in Sonoma County put together a celebration of International Women's Day. That has since expanded through the Congress to National Women's History Week and now National Women's History Month.

Together, the women in my district and the Project succeeded in nationalizing awareness of women's history. As word of the celebration's success spread across the country, State Departments of Education honored women's history week, and within a few years, thousands of schools and communities nationwide celebrated National Women's History Week during the month of March.

In 1987, the Project first petitioned Congress to expand the national celebration to the entire month of March. Due to their efforts, Congress issued a resolution declaring the month of March to be Women's History Month. Today is the first day of March, the first day of the Women's History Month for the year 2000.

Each year since, nationwide programs and activities in schools, workplaces, and communities have been developed to commemorate women's his-

tory in the national and international arena.

In honor of Women's History Month, I want to praise Mary Ruthsdotter, Molly MacGregor, and Bonnie Eisenberg who are the birth mothers for this very notion. And I want to acknowledge Cindy Burnham, Donna Kuhn, Sunny Bristol, Denise Dawe, Lisa McLean, Molly Henrikson and Kathryn Rankin, the women now at the Women's History Project Office. All of these women serve as leaders to educate Americans of all ages about the contributions of women in our society.

Mr. Speaker, to pay tribute to these women's achievements, I have reserved Statuary Hall on Wednesday, March 22. Proud mothers and daughters, educators, activists, historians, and other women across the country are invited to come to the Capitol to celebrate the 20th anniversary of women's history.

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Further, the project has been recognized for outstanding contributions to women's and girls' education by the National Education Association for Diversity and Education, by the National Association for Multicultural Education, and for scholarship service and advocacy by the Center for Women's Policy Studies.

I am truly grateful to all the devoted women at the Women's History Project for their continued commitment and for making an indelible mark on our country. However, Mr. Speaker, we still have a long way to go on women's issues. Sadly, America is also poised to cede its position as a world leader in the international fight against discrimination against women. We need to pass CEDAW, the Convention to End Discrimination Against All Women.

DRUG SMUGGLING ALONG THE BORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HAYES). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. BILBRAY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak of Alfredo De La Torre. Alfredo has served as the police chief of Tijuana-Baja California for the last few years. But this Sunday, after leaving church services with his family, Alfredo decided to do what he always does, to drive down to the police station to see how the operation was working. On the way to the police station, Mr. Speaker, Alfredo was attacked and was killed by professional hit people that fired almost 100 rounds into his car and inflicted 57 bullet wounds into his body.

Now, Alfredo is just one of many in Tijuana that have died over the last few years. This brutal murder, which occurred just a few miles from where I live in South San Diego in the Pearl Beach area is a reminder to all Americans of the sacrifices that are going on right now in the drug war.

In January, there was an attorney named Mr. Hernandez who was not as lucky as the police chief. This attorney, Mr. Hernandez, who was a former judge, had the misfortune of having his wife and his son with him when they were sprayed with gunfire by the same drug and alien-smuggling cartel that killed the police chief.

On April 28 of 1994, another police chief in Tijuana was assassinated after the cartel publicized that he had turned down a bribe from them. This is just how blatant it is getting in northern Mexico.

Not to think, Mr. Speaker, that we are insulated from the realities of this violence, in 1996, a few miles north of where my family lives, a man in my district was gunned down while he was driving up a road called Silver Strand by two hitmen who had the gall to stop and finish him off at point-blank range and then throw the gun into the car and proceed to turn around and drive back into Mexico.

This is a drug war that Americans have to wake up to. This month the President will consider about certifying Mexico and seeing if Mexico is doing enough. Mexico, Mr. Speaker, has sent troops to the border. They have armed military personnel at the border to fight the drug lords. They have disbanded their old police force and replaced them with a whole new system, because they are serious about drug interdiction. Mexico is intercepting guns and drugs every 50 to 100 miles in Mexico.

What are we doing? The administration has only hired half of the authorized border patrol agents that this Congress has asked them to hire. The administration refuses to talk about doing on the American side what Mexico has done on their side, and that is to bring the troops into the works. We who have talked so much that we are serious about the drug traffic have not done as much as Mexico.

Mr. Speaker, today there are 10,000 troops, American troops, in Kosovo and Bosnia for peacekeeping. What my family would like to know and my neighbors would like to know is when are we going to get some peacekeeping troops? When is our neighborhood going to be given the priority to fight the drug lords and the alien smugglers?

It is time that we need to emphasize that American resources have the first obligation to defend Americans on American soil and also to protect them from, not only the violence of the drug smugglers, but also the drugs themselves. This is a war that we cannot stand alone on, and we cannot point fingers south of the border.

I hope that the President certifies Mexico, not because they are doing as good as they should. They should do more. But I think we should certify it at the same time we point to ourselves that we need to do more. I hope the President joins with us.

The gentleman from Florida (Chairman MICA) is going to have a hearing

in San Diego, California, on March 7. I hope that a lot of my colleagues will consider coming to that hearing so they get firsthand experience of what is really happening on the frontline of the drug war.

The gentleman from New York (Chairman GILMAN) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM) have been very, very supportive on this. But, Mr. Speaker, let us remember Alfredo; and let us remember the people who are dying on both sides of the border, and let us not talk about we are willing to fight the drug war, but we are not willing to do half as much as our colleagues in the south.

I ask us to make the commitment of using our military, using our resources, using whatever it takes to win this war so nobody else will have to be killed, no one else will be slaughtered, and America can look up and look at our neighbors to the south and to the north and say we are doing everything we humanly can to stop this problem.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say sincerely my condolences to the De La Torre family. There is nothing that can cover up the pain and the suffering that they are seeing on their streets. Hopefully, we can keep it off our streets.

REFORM OF OUR NATION'S SCHOOLS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHERWOOD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Congress and past member of the Maryland State legislature, I have witnessed and been engaged in numerous debates on how to reform our Nation's classrooms. I certainly believe we do everything we can to ensure that we provide adequate funding and employ effective teaching techniques that will raise the academic output of our students.

However, even the most funding and the best teachers will not produce successful students if there are significant discipline problems that distract students from their studies.

So I come to the floor of this House to pay special tribute to a group of men and women that play a crucial role in keeping students in my district on track, the Baltimore City Police School Force.

Under the leadership of Chief Leonard Hamm, this public school police force is charged with providing protection and safety services to 108,000 students, 12,500 personnel, 187 schools, and 1,300 acres of land around Baltimore City, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. As a result of their efforts, there has been a dramatic drop in the amount of assaults and arrests in the Baltimore City school system.

During Chief Hamm's first year on the force in 1997, the number of arrests in Baltimore City schools dropped 45

percent from the first half to the second half of the school year. Assaults are down 34 percent and arrests are down a remarkable 57 percent.

During the last 2 school years, there have only been six incidents involving a gun. This is a remarkable turnaround from 1994 when there were 77 incidents involving firearms. Looking at individual schools, the change is even more dramatic. We have seen the number of disruptive incidents and violence drop by as much as 70 percent in some of the City's most troubled schools.

As we look back on the past year, filled with school violence, this turnaround gives me hope that our Nation's schools can be safe havens and productive learning environments that our parents expect.

Moreover, our youth should be stimulated by more than just reading, writing, and arithmetic. I cannot imagine any school experience without various afterschool activities, clubs and special events. Sadly, our school halls have become increasingly void of such activities, but an amazing thing has happened in Baltimore as a result in the drop in crime and fear of crime: school social activities have made a comeback.

School pep rallies and dances have been banned for several years because of safety concerns. But this past November, Southern High School had its first pep rally and dance in 6 years.

Dances, pep rallies, and sporting events foster pride in the school. If students have a sense of pride in their school, they will be less likely to want to disrupt it. These activities also enrich our students' overall experience.

So what is the secret to Chief Hamm's success? You might think success has something to do with high-tech surveillance cameras and metal detectors, but you will not find any metal detectors or cameras in Baltimore City public schools. Instead, Chief Hamm has installed a policy fostering mutual respect between police, students, and faculty.

He believes that when police earn the respect of students, students will respect the police and the school. Chief Hamm has also made it his mission to nurture a sense of ownership of the school by students. He believes that crime in school can be reduced when students respect their school in the same way they respect their own home. This strategy has led to the safest school environment in Baltimore City schools in many years.

In light of these successful efforts and hard work, I will be presenting the Baltimore City School Police Department with an Elijah E. Cummings U-TURN award. This acronym, U-TURN, has the obvious meaning of changing direction. However, each letter in this award describes what has taken place on the police force; U, unique; T, techniques; U, used; R, restore; and N, non-violence.

The Baltimore City School Police have certainly responded to a problem

in a manner deserving of recognition and praise. I applaud Chief Hamm and his force and look forward to a further reduction in crime and disruption in our schools.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I stand ready and pledge to do everything I can as a Member of this body to help the Baltimore City School Police force and other forces throughout the Nation to ensure that our children can safely prepare for their promising futures. As someone once said, our children are the living messages we send to a future we will never see. Congratulations, Chief Hamm, and congratulations to the Baltimore City School Police Force.

CONCERN REGARDING RELIGIOUS DEBATE IN OUR COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHERWOOD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. WALSH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my very deep concern about the character of the debate in our country today with regards to religion.

For the past 5 years, I have been very involved in the Irish peace process, and at the root of the hatred and the mistrust in northern Ireland is the differences in religion. We can see what damage and the trouble that it has caused to that country. Indeed, our own troops have been involved in Kosovo separating warring religious and national groups.

We are witnessing a war in Russia that has a great deal also to do with religion between Christians and Muslims. To continue this debate in our country with elected leaders criticizing religious leaders and religious leaders criticizing political leaders and political leaders criticizing other political leaders for taking sides with other religious leaders, I thought we had put that behind us. I thought that that sort of debate in this country was over, but obviously it is not.

Hubert Humphrey said a long time ago, the great happy warrior Democrat, he who throws mud loses ground. Unfortunately, there is a lot of mud being thrown around today, and a lot of it regarding this issue of religion.

I would like to address my comments to the choice by Speaker HASTERT of our chaplain. I do not understand why anyone, anyone would be critical of the Speaker's choice. It is a very personal decision. He made a choice and now he is being accused of being anti-Catholic.

I cannot fathom why anyone would raise that issue. He is an honorable man. He is a decent and honest man, and he made an honest decision. And we should respect that decision.

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But it seems that people will reach at anything to get political gain, and it is a downward spiral. If this debate continues, we are headed nowhere but

down with a very difficult situation ahead of us and no way to get out of it.

Let me just give my colleagues a little history regarding the choice of chaplain in the Congress. For the first 100 years of this country, we had 50 chaplains. Basically, one chaplain for each Congress. For the last 105 years, since around 1895, we have had five chaplains. Five. So the duration of their term in this position has become much, much longer. It is a different position than it was. And I am not so sure that the original Congresses did not have it right, one chaplain per Congress, one Congress per chaplain.

But to make the political points here, the Democratic party, the modern Democratic party, which began in the middle of the 18th century, has appointed 20 chaplains in its time. Republicans, the modern Republican Party, beginning around the same time, has appointed eight chaplains. In none of those cases, those 28 chaplains that were appointed, was there a Catholic priest appointed. There has never been an outcry before. Never been an outcry.

There are Members of this Congress currently criticizing Speaker HASTERT for his choice of a Protestant minister, a Presbyterian, criticizing him for that choice when they were seated in this House when other speakers appointed Protestant chaplains. Where was the outcry then? Where was the Democratic party, the criticism then? Why is it coming now to Speaker HASTERT? I think he made a wise decision. I think he made a wise choice, and I think we owe him the respect and the honor of making that decision.

The Speaker tried to open this process up. He appointed a committee to help him to make the choice. The committee came back, it was a bipartisan committee, with three names. Three individuals. No rank, no unanimous support for one, but they gave the Speaker three choices. He made a choice among those three, and he picked Reverend Wright. Maybe it was a mistake to open it up to a so-called democratic process.

Obviously, I could talk a lot longer about this, but suffice to say that we owe the Speaker the respect that he is due. We owe the choice that he has made the respect that that is due. And I would urge people to stop throwing mud and to stop this downward spiral of anti-religious talk in our country.

ALLEGATIONS OF RELIGIOUS BIAS AMONG REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP IS PURE BUNK

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHERWOOD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to follow along with the words echoed by my colleague from New York.

I am a Roman Catholic as well, and I do not understand this all of a sudden finger pointing over choices of chap-

lains or questioning people's beliefs. I personally work very closely with the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT) as Speaker of this House. In fact, he was the one that nominated me to be on the Committee on Ways and Means, considerably one of the most important committees of this Congress. The gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY), another fine gentleman who I work with every single day as majority leader, and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), and others who occupy the office of majority whip. I am a deputy whip. So I can assure every American that is interested in listening that none of these leaders indicates any bias towards anybody of any faith.

Now, I have a disagreement on at least the position of chaplain, and I long ago advocated we not have a chaplain; that we allow visiting chaplains from around the country so we would have the opportunity to have a Rabbi and have a Protestant minister or a Baptist minister and a Catholic priest. I personally go to my own church for salvation, and I do not choose to use the services of the chaplain.

At times I question having one, inasmuch as we do not allow kids to pray in school yet we start every day with a prayer. So I find it a little complicated. But at the same time I do not doubt for one minute that the choice made by the Speaker was a valid, genuine choice on that gentleman's part to serve this entire body, not to single out and not to ratchet up the debate.

It is amazing. I hear the other side of the aisle all of a sudden acting as if they are for all Catholics. If we look at the voting records of most of the Members, we would probably have to question considerably whether they maintain the very principles and edicts that the Catholic churches espouses. There is a complete virtual disagreement on virtually every issue the Catholic church uses and would be measured on a scorecard if you had to have one on that basis.

I ask the Members to please stop this finger pointing. Stop the finger pointing and questioning people's values and beliefs. When Spike Lee made the comment about going to shoot Charleton Heston, I did not see any long-standing parade of speakers urging the rejection of this kind of thought. They sat quietly by and allowed that to be part of the mainstream dialogue.

When I hear Louis Farakhan on the mall marching against people and calling people names, I do not hear this outrage from Members on the other side of the body screaming about how intolerant people are. No, they are silent. But they can use something like this as a wedge issue.

George W. Bush goes to Bob Jones University certainly not to espouse or advocate positions held by one man that leads that church. There were thousands and thousands of students that wanted to hear the nominee, potentially, of the Republican Party address the issues that are important to

them, as if any of us are invited. Daily we are invited to places. I was invited to a synagogue. Of course, I went to speak to my constituents about issues important to them at a synagogue. I am a Catholic. Should I have not gone simply because it was not a house of worship in my own faith?

So I denounce this and ask people to be a little more civil and a little bit more respectful of the differences that we have as Americans on fundamental beliefs and principles. We should all agree that the nice thing about the United States of America is that we can worship in the way we so choose. We can go to the places of worship we recognize as those that lead our faith. But we do not cast aspersion nor do we criticize people.

So this commentary that somehow the Speaker is biased and the majority leader is biased is pure bunk. And, again, I say to my colleagues that if they are compassionate, if they are one of faith, if they are one that deeply believes Catholicism is an important religion, those who seem to be defending it today and saying that Republicans are anti-Catholic, I can clearly assure them, clearly assure them from the bottom of my heart, that that is not the premise of the Republican Party and it is certainly not that of our leadership.

SENIOR CITIZENS' FREEDOM TO WORK ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand here with my fellow Republican, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW), who was instrumental in helping us get the Social Security earnings limit off today.

I introduced this bill 1 year ago, after hearing from many folks around the Dallas area and surrounding cities who are over 65 who want to continue to work. One of them is named Tony Santos. That is his picture right there. Tony is a part-time operator of a television camera now at Channel 4 in Dallas. He started there in 1951, when he was just 18 years old, and he retired in 1992. I first met him when I got back from being a POW in Vietnam; and he helped cover that return back to Dallas, which was really emotional for me.

Not just anyone can operate a television camera. It is a technical job and it requires specialized skills. So when folks take a vacation or get sick, Channel 4 finds itself in a bind and they call on Tony. Tony is over 65 and, after all, has a lot of experience, and he is happy to fill in. But the station needs him more than he is able to work due to the Social Security earnings penalty, which says that if he works more and earns more than \$17,000 in this year he

starts losing his Social Security benefits. He worked for and paid for those benefits, and it is not Washington's money. It is his money.

Tony's beautiful grandchildren, over here, are also shown: Daniel, Emily, Jacob, Jason, and Stephanie. She is just 8. Tony wants to be able to help them buy school books and get the best education possible, but he is penalized by the government just for working to support his grandchildren. Mr. Speaker, that is un-American. It is not right that Tony should not be able to work all he wants to, he is in great health, and still receive his Social Security benefits which he worked so hard for.

I wonder sometimes why we try to punish other Americans with the laws we pass. I want America to know that Tony Santos, here in this picture, heeds the words of Thomas Edison: "There is no substitute for hard work." And I think the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) and I both have heard workers in America say that to us; that when they get to be 65, they are not necessarily ready to retire. But they have worked and put into the Social Security fund and they would like that little extra benefit that it provides.

This morning, believe it or not, the Democrats, some of them, said this bill only helps the rich. Well, I am sure it will come as news to Tony Santos that he is rich, because he is not. And why we always hear this class warfare created is beyond me. This bill provides relief for all hard-working seniors. And today we took the first step in making sure that Tony Santos and the other close to a million seniors just like him can work and be rewarded and not be penalized.

I was pleasantly surprised President Clinton has decided to endorse the bill, the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act, to eliminate the Social Security earnings penalty. One day earlier the President's chief spokesman spoke out against it. The gentleman from Florida may remember that. But today at least I am thankful the President has changed his mind and decided to support the repeal of the Social Security earnings limit without any strings attached. And that is exactly what happened today on the floor of this House. We passed a clean bill with no strings attached. Just a bill to eliminate the Social Security earnings limit.

Our Republican leadership has always understood the importance of this issue, and they made it a top-10 item for this Congress. For the past three sessions I have introduced repealing the Social Security earnings penalty, but by no means was I the first sponsor of this legislation. My colleagues will remember Barry Goldwater and his efforts in 1964. Repealing the penalty on seniors was his initiative way back then, and I am elated to finally be standing here so close to the repeal of the penalty that we can finally give every American the freedom to work.

I must confess, though, that I have a feeling that the close to 65,000 seniors

affected by this penalty in Texas, and the close to a million seniors affected nationwide will be more thrilled than I am to see it passed.

Would the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) care to comment on that? I know the gentleman has been the chairman of the Subcommittee on Social Security in the Committee on Ways and Means, and he has been an interested person in this issue. And not only this issue but, as my colleagues know, he has been a supporter of the Shaw-Archer Social Security reform bill, which I consider this step one toward addressing that problem.

Mr. SHAW. Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) first of all, for being so persistent. The fact that that bill is named H.R. 5 shows that that was one of the first filed here, and those first numbers are usually set aside by the leadership to show that these are bills that we really plan to move. The gentleman's having filed that over a year ago to have gotten that number I think really speaks very well of his foresight and his faith in this Congress, and his persistence, in that he filed several of these bills in the past.

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We had hoped that this H.R. 5 was going to be folded into the Archer-Shaw bill, which was going to be a much larger bill that would have saved Social Security for all time. But when you get into presidential election years, sometimes it is hard to really bring people together and pass good, common sense legislation, as the Archer-Shaw bill is; and it is one that would save Social Security for all time without privatizing Social Security.

This is one of the things that really concerns me more than anything else. And I was very concerned to hear the President's last proposal in which he was going to take the money coming into Social Security and play the stock market with it.

I think Americans do not want that. That is something that we on the Republican side are going to oppose. And my guess is that the majority of the Democrats will also oppose it.

But we do have to change the way that we view Social Security, but we can do it without increasing the FICA tax, no more burden upon the American worker; and we can do it, too, without in any way, any way, changing the benefits so that the cost-of-living increases stay in the Social Security system.

The example that my colleague has pointed out with his constituent reminds me of a call that came into our office. A young lady who works in the office, Elizabeth Richardson, who received the call just in the last day or two. It was someone calling from California. It was not from a constituent. I think it was San Diego or somewhere out on the West Coast. The person wanted an explanation of what it was

that we were doing. And she explained to him that we were removing that onerous tax from seniors that takes a dollar out of every \$3 of benefits that they receive should they go over the earnings limit.

And he paused for a moment, and she heard a little silence; and after she explained it all to him, he said, Would you go give the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) a big hug.

Well, we have a policy in my office against young ladies giving the boss a big hug. However, I can say that this shows the gratitude that I think so many of those seniors out there are going to really feel when they really understand what we have done.

This is not something that we are delaying until next year. This earnings penalty will be done away with as of January 1, 2000. That is 2 months ago. So the monies that these people have already lost will be given back to them. And it is the right thing to do.

That is why we had every Member of this House step up and put their card in the electronic device that we vote on and put their vote up on the scoreboard, which is right here above the press gallery, and I think it shows the widespread support that this has.

A lot of people have wondered, how did this possibly get into the Social Security law in the first place. Well, very simply put, the Social Security bill was written during the Great Depression back in the 1930s; and at that time it was the feeling of the Congress, and I believe probably of Franklin Delano Roosevelt at the time, that the older workers should move aside to make room for the younger workers. But remember, we had huge unemployment of 25 percent.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, let me add if I might what Roosevelt did in that first bill. He created a Social Security program; and if they worked, they could not have any Social Security. And then it kind of reformed throughout the years, and we finally got the penalty up.

I see the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY) here, too, who is also on the Committee on Ways and Means, that maybe can help us.

But, in 1935, seniors could not receive any benefits if they worked. And then, believe it or not, it was modified 4 years later, in 1939, so that if they earned up to \$14.99 a month, they did not have to pay a penalty. Can you believe that?

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I do believe it. But, you know, back then it might have made a little bit of sense when you had unemployment of about 25 percent, people desperately needed jobs.

Now we have the other problem. We need more workers in this country. The economy is doing good, and we need more workers. And we particularly need the skills of our seniors. We are losing so much talent.

The gentleman from the State of Florida (Mr. FOLEY) and I have I think it is 81,000 seniors that are going to be

directly affected by this. Nationwide it is, as my colleague said, just under a million. It is a little over 800,000 of the seniors that are going to be affected.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is close to 1.1 million they are saying now according to the 1999 Census Bureau.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, this is just the right thing to do. Now, people have wondered why in the world Congress did not do it earlier. Well, it simply means that that money was being spent by the Congress to run the Government, so they were taking it away from our seniors, taking their pension away, so they could spend the money on other things. That was wrong. It was wrong then. It is wrong now.

That is why we have had this great support and the support from the White House that I am pleased to see that we are getting at this point. The President said he did not want to reform Social Security on a piecemeal basis. But I think when he took a good look at this, he said, this is one that I have got to support. It is a great initiative, and I am so pleased the result we have had here in the House.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask the gentleman, what is this going to cost?

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, over the long-run, it does not cost us anything.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, and that is great. Absolutely no cost, according to the actuaries, to the Social Security Trust Fund. So we are not invading the Social Security Trust fund at all.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, let me explain that for a moment. Because that sounds impossible, but it is.

What happens when that money is taken away from the seniors in the form of an earnings penalty, it is given back to them very slowly after their 70th birthday, so that their benefits actually increase a little bit in order for them to get some of that money back. And if they live long enough, they get it all back.

But the problem with that is that the Government is using their money which they earned, which they are entitled to at the retirement age, which the Congress said is 65 and that is what they are entitled to. So it is wrong, even though they get it back over a long period of time.

In the long run, it does not cost anything. In the short run, it does cost something and it is going to cost something. The money is there now. We have walled it off to save Social Security. We have walled it off in the lockbox, which I think most of the Members support. And it certainly passed the House of Representatives with good support from the Democrats as well, but a Republican idea in which we walled it off.

We do not spend the Social Security surplus on governmental expense. It is wrong, wrong, wrong.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thought it was amazing that

one of the ladies that testified before our committee, and I do not think the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY) heard it, or maybe he did, it was the full committee, because she said, they are stealing that from me. That is my Social Security earnings that I am supposed to be receiving, and you are taking it away from me. You are stealing it from me. And guess what, you get it back later, but not with interest.

So the Government is kind of putting it to you when you have a penalty like that.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleague, what does he think?

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) and, of course, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) for their comments.

I was delighted to see on this House floor today a unanimous vote for the measure that he introduced in our committee. It is a beautiful thing that people are finally recognized. At least in America, seniors are recognized for the value that they bring to our communities.

It is interesting to think about back in Social Security's origination, of course, the longevity tables were much different; and I can understand maybe why initially they thought there may be a penalty because people were not expected to live past 68 or 72 years of age. And now they are longer, and they are more productive and healthier.

One of the most important things I want to strongly note is that the seniors are the most important life link not only to the past but to the future. We can learn so much. Many people in my generation and below my generation, particularly all these new Internet people and Internet-challenged children, if you will, they are looking to the 21st century as the new unique and opportunistic place in time; and they are forgetting the wonderful gains made by those who are now over 65 and those who have brought so much insight and wisdom to our communities.

I mentioned today on the House floor that my father retired at the age of 77 from the Palm Beach County school system. He continued to work. And, of course, he had a penalty back when he worked between 65 and 70. And I think that was patently unfair. He worked from his early youth, served in the Marines, served in World War II, came home to raise a family, became a proud member of the community, and chose a profession that he deeply loved. He could have made money in the private sector and done some things, I am certain. He is very talented and smart. But he chose to instill the knowledge he had with our children in the school system.

He was a coach, much like the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), the Speaker of the House, back in his days of high school. He then decided after 65 that he wanted to stay vigorous and involved in helping change children's lives. So he did. And lo and

behold, our Government slapped a penalty on his Social Security income.

As the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY) said clearly at one of our conferences, he said, under any other circumstances, this would be discriminatory; there would be an age discrimination suit filed.

And so I applaud the leadership. I applaud certainly both the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT). I know they have worked on it for years and years. But I particularly applaud the two of my colleagues, because they really spearheaded the initiative. They brought it to fruition.

More importantly for the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) and I, who represent Florida, I am the seventh oldest, if you will, Medicare-eligible district in America. And I know that this is fabulous news for our citizens. We have adjoining districts, so we have so many similar, if you will, constituents who want to be a part of the great economy, who want to be part of the dynamics that are now evolving; and they want to be feeling like they are appreciated.

But somehow that light goes out in the Federal Government at the age of 65. No, no. Why do they not go sit down, go rest, go lounge around somewhere, because they are no longer valuable, they are no longer needed.

What the Archer-Shaw bill does today is say to senior citizens 65 to 70, not only are you needed, you are wanted. We want you as part of our country. We want you as part of our economy. And we want you to not only have your Social Security money that you paid for and that you earned, but we want to give you the chance to make more money in your pockets to safeguard your financial security.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, and guess what? They pay taxes on that money, too.

This is a letter from AARP, which has given their support to this project, which says, "Older workers have the skills, expertise, and enthusiasm that employers value." They support reducing or eliminating this penalty totally, and that is what we have done.

As the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) said, it is a good first step toward getting Social Security reform totally. At least we are looking at it. As chairman of the committee, my colleague is going to have hearings to talk to this issue and others that have come up during the debate.

I see we are joined by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA).

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, can I ask one question if the gentleman would continue to yield.

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) has been in Congress since 1980. And I am not certain of the start of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON).

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, 1991.

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask the gentleman, why was this not consid-

ered before? Why was this issue not brought to the forefront?

It seems like, with 422 votes, this is a child looking for adoption and it found it today. But what was wrong in all those years?

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is the Democrats controlled the Congress for such a long time over 40 years, and they did not bother to introduce this bill or make it go. And now they realize that this is an important issue, and they are with us on it for a change. That is good. I think it is time for a little bit of partisanship.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I say to the gentleman, I think it is also important to note that we have walled off Social Security with the lockbox. That money is out there and held sacred. It goes to pay down the debt if it is not being used to reform Social Security or Medicare. It is money that has been paid in by workers for their retirement years. We quit spending it.

The direct answer to the question of why was it not done before: in the old days, the Congress spent that money. They spent it as if it were unencumbered tax dollars. They spent it on all kind of problems. In fact, they spent even more than that, and that is what ran up the national debt. That is why we owe so much money.

But things are changed around here. We are living within our means. We are paying down the national debt. We are reforming Social Security. We are not taking Americans' pensions away. We are allowing the older American workers to keep what they have earned.

Social security is an earned right of the American people. It is that simple. That is black letter law. And it is not for any Congress to take away any of that or compromise any of those benefits. It is a contract, a sacred contract, between the Government and the people of this country, the American workers. And this is what has to be preserved.

You know what I was thinking when I was sitting here managing a portion of this bill today, I sort of felt the spirit of Claude Pepper coming into this area. A portion of my district down in Miami-Dade County was in Claude Pepper's. He would have been very proud of this Congress today and what we have been able to accomplish. Because he was Mr. Social Security when he was there, and I think we are taking his place as Mr. Social Security.

Our job is to protect the sacred, contractual right of our American workers.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, did my colleagues know that by 2030, one-fifth of the entire population will be age 65 or older?

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According to a Manpower Inc. study released this week, nearly one in three U.S. companies will hire more workers in the upcoming second quarter, of this year. Tight labor conditions are going

to continue to persist and demand for workers is at the highest level in 20 years. Those seniors that we have taken the earnings limit off of now have an incentive to go back to work, and I think that these companies will hire them.

Mr. SHAW. We need them. It is not only what they are entitled to. We need them in the workforce. There is so much talent that we have lost. Go into the hospitals today, go down the corridors, see the age of the nurses that are about to retire. When the baby boomers come through and when they start using the hospitals more, who is going to be there to take care of them? We have a shortage of nurses in this country.

The school teachers, some of the greatest teachers that we have are age 65 and older. We need to keep them in the workplace to train our kids. On a construction job, the supervisors are older people and they are there to train the apprentice, the young people coming in. We need to pass these skills down. It is wrong when people are living longer, enjoying life more, want to work or even have to work that we come back and penalize them. That is just so wrong. It is so wrong.

We talked earlier about class warfare. What about this one? For so long, if you were wealthy, if you had stocks and bonds, if you had real estate, if you had income that was not what we call earned income, that is stuff that you actually earn by working, you were not penalized. But if you were a working person, whether you had to work or just wanted to work, you were penalized. What kind of class warfare is that? We are getting rid of that. We are getting rid of that. It is an earned penalty whether you are living off of dividends, interest or living off of the sweat of your brow, you are not going to be penalized anymore once you pass retirement age and go on to Social Security.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. That was a good statement. I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA).

Mr. HOEKSTRA. First I would like to express my appreciation to my colleagues for moving that bill through the committee, moving it to the House floor and being able to come out on the floor of the House and getting unanimous support.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. I have never seen a faster subcommittee than this guy ran. It was bang, bang and it was out, with a unanimous vote.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. A unanimous vote, bipartisan, all the right characteristics. I think you are going after one of the most unfair things in the tax code. You have identified that. I did nine town meetings last week. In my first town meeting, it is the exact issue that came up.

There was a gentleman who had retired from teaching, had been substitute teaching and said, I reached the threshold. The school wanted to keep

me in the classroom. I wanted to stay in the classroom. It is one of my rural communities, Fremont, Michigan. He said I wanted to stay in the classroom but I looked at it and it made no sense for me to stay in the classroom, in effect, it would almost cost me money for the privilege of being in the classroom to teach those kids.

That gentleman now is going to be able to come back and he will be able to do it this year. He will be able to call up that school district and say, I can teach as much as you now want me to teach this year and as much as I am available to teach because the other nice thing about this bill is that, as you said in your closing statement today on the floor, the bill goes into effect on January 1, not of 2001 but of 2000, correct?

Mr. SHAW. That is correct.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. When this bill gets signed by the President, it will in effect be retroactive, a retroactive tax cut for workers for this year. It fits in perfectly. It was 2 weeks ago that we had a hearing in my subcommittee about the shortage of workers that we are facing. So whether it is the school teacher and qualified teachers in Fremont, Michigan or whether it is other industries around the country today, we know that there is a shortage of workers and that seniors have so much to add in terms of their skills and their expertise to filling that need that it is not only the fair thing to do, it is the right thing to do.

We need these workers if they want to. We need them to stay in the workforce. The least we could do is make the tax code neutral to that decision rather than penalizing them for staying in the workforce, at least now as they consider whether they are going to work or whether they are going to enjoy their retirement, they do not have to take a look at the tax code and see, now, what does the tax code want me to do and how many hours does it want me?

What a ridiculous process to go through. It is the fair thing to do; it is the right thing to do. Again I think as the chairman pointed out, when you take a look at what we are doing with Social Security, the lockbox this past year, not spending one dollar of the Social Security surplus and dedicating that all to paying down the debt, we are doing a number of things that are starting to shore up and save Social Security so that we can address the next issue which the chairman is also working on with a great passion which is doing the fundamental reforms to ensure that this program will not only be there for the seniors of today but for the baby boomers of tomorrow and for our kids.

So we really are taking a step by step approach. I again appreciate the work that the chairman is doing there and also appreciate the chairman's support for one little thing, we call it the worker right to know. Again it is an issue of the American people deserve to know

how much money we are putting into Social Security and one of the things that is kind of a little bit of misinformation out there is all the workers get their W-2 at the end of the year and they see the portion that they have paid in and it is a pretty good size number, it is 6.5 percent of what they have made, they say, wow, that is my Social Security contribution. That is the money that was sent to Washington for me.

What they do not recognize and what they do not know is that for every dollar that they paid in, their employer was forced to match that, and so really it is 13 percent of their income is coming here for Social Security, supposedly with their name on it.

Mr. SHAW. I think that is something that people sort of miss, that kind of goes over their head, because Social Security, both the employer and the employee's portion of it is part of the compensation of the American worker, so they are paying in, I think it is 12.4 percent of their wages is going into the Social Security Administration. That is plenty high. When you start thinking about it, particularly for low-wage people, we can save Social Security without in any way raising that tax, and it would be wrong to raise that tax. We do not need to tax American workers one dime more and we can save Social Security just by getting busy and doing it.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Most people do not realize that that tax was 2 percent to start with. It is up to 13 percent now. It has been raised eight times since 1939. That is atrocious. You are absolutely right that we should never ever increase that. In fact, we ought to start decreasing it. Most of the options show the way to do that.

Mr. SHAW. Actually under the Archer-Shaw bill which you pointed to earlier, it would be many years from now, but the future Congress could many years from now actually reduce that tax substantially and still keep Social Security fully funded and paying out the benefits for all times.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Our seniors are paying a penalty, a severe penalty today, where they are paying a 33 percent tax really on their earnings. Some of them because of the situation are as high as 80 percent tax bracket, marginal tax bracket. So they are really getting penalized. I think it is a credit to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER) that we sent the President a clean bill, and I have to tell you that we got a clean bill out of the House.

You will admit that. There is nothing else on it. It is an elimination of the Social Security earnings penalty. He has promised to sign that bill if it reaches his desk without other provisions. However, I am a little worried about the Senate. Some of the Senate Democrats are claiming that they would like to offer amendments to end the penalty on seniors. Although we

have bipartisan support, some Democratic obstructionists want to alter the core objectives.

I think we should all plead with our friends across America to write their Senators and tell them we do not need an amendment to this Freedom to Work Act because we want the President to sign it, and he said he would if it comes out clean. I am hopeful, I think it is Senator ASHCROFT that has submitted the bill over there and Senator LOTT says that they are going to push for expeditious passage. I look forward to a big signing with the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) of the total bill when it is done. Your mention that it will take effect retroactively is exactly correct, January 1, this year.

Mr. SHAW. I am sure that we will all be in the Rose Garden smiling together with the President and be there when he signs it. I am certainly looking forward to that day.

I again want to congratulate you and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PETERSON), your original cosponsor in carrying this through. I want to congratulate the entire House on the decorum we had today. There was a little fringe politics, a little boxing going in. I felt a couple of jabs coming from the other side but on the whole the debate was of the highest caliber I have ever seen, just like a fresh air blowing through this institution. I made note during the debate that people tuning in and looking at it would think they were looking at another parliamentary body somewhere else and not here in Washington at the United States Congress. This was certainly one of the finest days that I have seen. My congratulations to you.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. It is a rare day in Washington.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Again I would like to express my appreciation to my two colleagues for sponsoring it and moving this bill forward. I think the reason we had such a great debate on the floor today is that Members on both sides of the aisle recognized that it was the right thing to do.

The end result is we have provided seniors the opportunity to continue doing what many of them want to do, which is to continue working because they love their jobs and in many cases they are in professions where they can mentor, train, and teach young people. This provides a wonderful avenue to keep those skills and those resources in the workplace. Congratulations to my colleague from Texas for spearheading this effort and getting it done. Now we will watch as we see what we can do to move it over to the other body.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. I appreciate the support of the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA). I yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. There are a lot of parents of this bill. The gentleman from Texas is one of those parents. This is something that has been

in the works with bills introduced for the last 15 or 16 years trying to correct an injustice.

It is interesting it has taken us this long. Then there is a unanimous vote to move ahead. When it is an injustice and it is moving ahead with fairness, then I think there is a general attitude in this Chamber when it is reasonable, when it is fair, when it is getting rid of something that is unjust, then it is very good.

I would just say there is another provision that I hope we can move ahead with in terms of fairness, in terms of encouraging individuals to work, and, that is, to increase benefits for individuals that, at age 65, decide to delay taking those Social Security benefits. And so if they wait a year, they should end up with more benefits. It is called delayed retirement credit. A provision of this bill that would make an 8 percent increase in benefits for every year was an amendment that I hoped to incorporate in this bill someplace along the line.

I talked to the White House, the President has agreed to it, the Democrats and Republicans have agreed to it. The actuaries at the Social Security Administration have suggested that it does not cost money because actually it might save money encouraging individuals that want to delay taking Social Security to have an increased benefit later on, to make it actuarially sound. Another point that I think is important in this issue is that widows eventually would have the higher benefit when they become widows. This kind of action, the kind of piecemeal approach of sending one bill at a time to the President I think is the right policy decision, so you can measure the merits, the pros and cons of each policy. Again my congratulations and thanks to the gentleman from Texas for having this hour.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. I appreciate those comments. Do you want to tell people what the percentage is right now, because you are not raising it very much.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Right now under the legislation as we amended it in 1983, it started at 2 percent per year increase after age 65, then it went to 4. This year it is going to 6 percent. The amendment that I have proposed would move it up to 8 percent, which is the actuarially sound amount. If you are going to live an average life span, then it is reasonable if you put off taking benefits and continue working, continuing paying the FICA tax to support Social Security, it ends up ultimately being somewhat of an advantage and so moving that 8 percent per year up until you are age 70 is a reasonable step to take.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. But what you are saying, they will get their money back where they are not now.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Especially if you exercise and you live longer than the average, then you of course are

going to get more than your money back. So everybody should exercise, all seniors should contribute to the workforce and contribute their talents, now they can do it under this legislation.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. We can all live to be 100 and earn our Social Security benefits, right?

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. It is so interesting. I chaired the Social Security task force. The futurists for health care are suggesting that within 25 years, anybody that wants to live to be 100 years old would have that option.

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Within 35 to 40 years, anybody that wants to live to be 120 years old will have that option. This is just another signal that everybody, especially younger people, better save now, so save and invest now, because who knows what medical technology is going to do.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Well, I thank the gentleman for joining us today. I would just like to say that I want to repeat that this legislation will take effect retroactively, from January 1 of this year, which is important to a lot of seniors. That means you can go to work right now.

Republicans agree, we have got to set in motion steps to reform Social Security overall. I think the gentleman is involved in some issues like that. I can think of no better way than by repealing the Social Security earnings limit as a start.

I always tell people, you know, I fought in two wars, Korea and Vietnam, for freedom; and I think that that entitles our seniors the freedom to earn the savings they have been putting away and paying for during their years of employment, year after year.

I think Nick probably agrees with me, America's seniors need, want, and deserve a penalty elimination. No more penalties. This is a day of freedom. I salute the gentleman and all America. Thank you.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Sam, everybody salutes you. You are a great American and a great veteran.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUYKENDALL). The Chair reminds all Members that it is not in order in debate to refer to other Members by their first names.

A CRISIS IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, today was a historic day; and I join my colleagues on the other side in celebrating the passage of the Senior Citizens' Free-

dom to Work Act. It is a great achievement. We all should be quite proud of it. I congratulate my colleagues. It was a bipartisan achievement, and we should all celebrate it and also take the next step. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle said we should take steps to reduce the Social Security tax as soon as possible, so I hope that that is going to be somewhere in the proposed budget proposals and appropriations proposals, that we will begin to take back, roll back, the increase in the payroll taxes.

The payroll taxes represent the largest increases in taxes over the last 2 decades. So we heard our colleagues on the Republican side say they think it ought to be rolled back. We want to endorse that wholeheartedly. Let us roll back the payroll tax and lower the taxes that people pay for Social Security.

The immortal words of Thomas Jefferson kept ringing in my ears as I listened to the debate today, "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

In affirming the fact that we want to take care of our senior citizens, we say we want to have more life, longer life, and we are all in favor of that. Life is sacred; and all over the world I think there is no ideology, no political philosophy at this point and no religion that condones irreverence for life.

Reverence for life exists everywhere. No political party anywhere in the world openly says that some people should be destroyed and others should be kept in existence anymore. Reverence for life is there. We hope that the reverence for life, although there might be a debate about when life begins, how early it begins, whether there is life as we know it in the womb, or afterwards, all of those debates are debates where we respect each other's opinions and ought to work that out. But certainly once a human being is here, reverence for that life ought to exist.

As we practice law enforcement, as we practice law enforcement we must all bear that in mind, that no one can be careless about another human being's life.

I am going to be on the floor discussing the Congressional Black Caucus alternative budget. I have said before that everything that we do in this Congress relates to the budget, and certainly the Social Security and the roll-back of taxes is one item that we shall propose in our Congressional Black Caucus alternative budget. We will be dealing with many other subjects, education, housing, health, health care, economic development, livable communities, foreign aid, welfare, low-income assistance, juvenile justice and law enforcement.

This last item, juvenile justice and law enforcement, was placed in the top priorities of the Congressional Black Caucus alternative budget preparation process by the gentlewoman from

Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE), who said it may not be a big budget item, she is not sure what form it is going to take, but we should address in this budget, which sets the tone for all that we are going to do this year, it will set the tone for the way the appropriations come out.

We are spending money, and in spending money we show what is most important to us. We ought to deal with the juvenile justice and law enforcement system, certainly from the point of view of African Americans and other minorities, because there has been a series of eruptions in the last year that have made it quite clear that America has a very profound problem when it comes to law enforcement for minorities.

The recent verdict in the trial of the four policemen who shot and killed Amadou Diallo is an indication of how profound that problem is. The verdict is not only outrageous because of the fact that it allows four armed policemen who shot down an innocent man standing in a doorway in the vestibule of his own home, it also is an outrage because of the fact that to cover up for those four men, a whole system went into place. The judicial system, the criminal justice system, collaborated in a coverup. We had very strange things happening.

This is a problem. There are rogue cops. There are extreme elements in the law enforcement profession. We see them all the time, from Waco to the Amadou Diallo shooting. We see it in Los Angeles, where policemen are confessing about 2 decades of placing evidence on people and pretending they are guilty, convicting them, and also beating them up and sometimes shooting them. All kinds of things are being confessed and uncovered in the Los Angeles Police Department.

We saw it in New Jersey, when finally the New Jersey State Police admitted they had an official policy of racial profiling. In Philadelphia some years ago we had the same problem of policemen who confessed after they were exposed of wrongfully placing evidence and people being convicted as a result.

We see it tragically in Illinois, where in Illinois the governor said there should be no more executions until we take steps to straighten out law enforcement and the criminal justice system so that innocent people are not placed on death row. Why did he do this? Because of 25 people who were on death row, indisputable evidence was generated to prove that 13 were innocent, 13 of 25 were innocent. That, said the governor, is more than he can take; and he decided he would no more be a part of the possibility that innocent people would die.

So we have in the whole Nation a pattern. We have 2 million people in prison in this Nation, and some people are proud of that. We are the only industrialized nation that has that kind of large number of people in prison.

Most of those 2 million people in prison are people who are minorities. We have a problem that is nationwide. Amadou Diallo's case is not a New York case, and for that reason I come to the floor of the House to make certain that it gets the appropriate attention here in this forum.

Mr. Speaker, the polls are showing in New York State that the overwhelming majority of the citizens of New York think that there was a miscarriage of justice in the verdict on the Amadou Diallo trial. Black and white together demonstrated in the streets of New York against this outrage. Criminally negligent homicide was obvious, if not manslaughter. After all, 41 bullets were fired, 19 entered the body of Amadou Diallo, and some of those bullets were fired after the body was on the ground. There were bullet holes in his feet, indicating that he was lying prone and they were still shooting.

This problem of miscarriage of justice in the criminal justice system unfortunately is a nationwide problem, as I have just said, not just a New York problem. For that reason, we must insist that this Nation address the issue at this level.

We are violating human rights on a massive scale. The situation deserves the immediate attention of the Congress of the United States. Acquittal of the officers who slaughtered Amadou Diallo is an outrageous miscarriage of justice, and it is a profound abuse of human rights.

The leadership of the Caring Majority now has a sacred duty to set forth and carry out for as long as necessary a comprehensive plan for justice for Amadou Diallo and all the related people who are victimized by an oppressive criminal justice system.

We want a permanent end to systemic police oppression and criminal justice system conspiracies throughout the entire Nation. Such a plan must include mass demonstrations, because only through mass demonstrations do we offer all citizens the opportunity to show their outrage. But beyond the direct action, there must be long-term legal, legislative and international diplomatic efforts to address this human rights abuse.

The criminal justice system in America allows itself to be contaminated by the extremists in law enforcement, by the extremists in the police profession. The rogue cops and the rogue agents are abetted by the fact that the system will not expose them.

When the rogue cops and the extremists commit crimes, or even violate ordinary procedures, immediately a coverup system goes into motion. An entire police department goes into motion to cover up the actions of a few, automatically, regardless of who they are.

Several of these police who shot Amadou Diallo had a record of being brutal and using excessive force. That record was not allowed to be discussed in the trial, one of the problems with

the trial. Several of them had been involved in incidents that were of a racist nature. None of their past history could be discussed.

But all of it is relevant when you are seeking to determine which elements of the police department, which elements in the law enforcement system, are extreme and ought to be exposed. But instead of exposing them, respectful cops, people who are decent and know better, people who have a guilty conscience for years afterwards, go into motion. They call it the blue wall of silence. Automatically say nothing, do nothing to hurt your fellow policemen, and, in some cases, tell a lie, cover up.

One of the reasons Amadou Diallo was shot so many times was the fact that there is also an unwritten code which says that if you have an extreme situation like that, every cop must be involved who is on the scene. There were four, and, even though he was down and dead, all four had to shoot, because that way you had a situation where there was no innocent witness. Nobody could be innocent and be a witness to what happened against the others. That is an unwritten code, which results in many times excessive shooting by police, large numbers of bullets being fired. The public is baffled, why did they do that? They did it so everybody would be culpable; nobody could be a witness.

When these extreme situations occur, judges become part of the process of coverup, district attorneys become part of the process of coverup. The rigged American criminal justice system has once more in the case of Amadou Diallo massacred the human rights of a powerless minority person.

Amadou Diallo was, first, a hate crime victim of deadly profiling. Policemen going through a minority neighborhood see a man on the steps of his own home, in his own vestibule, and decide he might be a criminal. If that is not racial profiling, I do not know what is racial profiling. It never happens in white neighborhoods. It never happens. We have not had these outrageous extreme cases in white neighborhoods. Amadou Diallo was a victim of police profiling.

He was, secondly, the victim of a desperate police coverup, a coverup conspiracy which began when the police officers, who knew he was already helpless, all fired bullets into his body in order to guarantee that all four would be defendants and there would be no innocent witnesses. Like the blue wall of silence, this multiple assault technique is part of an unwritten code of coverup.

Additionally, Amadou Diallo was a victim of the government's failure to appoint a special prosecutor to try a unique case involving a police department which routinely works in collaboration with the Bronx district attorney's office. Now, we have made demands for years that in cases involving police corruption, police misconduct, a special outside prosecutor who does not

work with those police on an ongoing basis ought to be appointed.

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For the last 40 years we have made that demand, and it still goes unheeded. The prosecution's case in this trial, and the whole world saw it, and I want to congratulate the judge for at least one thing, he was willing to allow the trial to be on TV. Everybody could see the ineptness of the District Attorney's presentation. Now, we cannot believe that it was by mistake.

Finally, Amadou Diallo was a victim of bold manipulation of other vital components of the judicial system. A judge who was known for his predilection to defend police officers, known for that, who was ignorant of and insensitive to the civic and social environment in which Diallo was killed. The New York City environment, this judge in Albany, the capital of New York State, knew very little about it.

And then they recruited, in this change of venue, moving from New York City, the Bronx, to Albany, they recruited a jury that was definitely unfamiliar with the New York City factors, and large numbers of Upstate people are hostile to the whole complex set of problems that New York City faces, hostile to New York City's complex problems.

Is that a jury of peers of the police? I do not think so. They do not live in Albany. Is it a jury of the peers of Amadou Diallo? Certainly not. But not by accident did all of this happen: The venue was changed, and a judge is selected who constantly asks the jury to see the case through the eyes of the police.

When we take the charge of the judge to the jury, we would have a classic case of a jury being assaulted repeatedly with statements which push them to a decision that was an unjust decision and a miscarriage of justice. Given the negative structuring of this case, its outcome was predictable.

Nonetheless, the caring majority of our community and the entire Nation, the shock, we are not evil enough to believe there is not a level of decency below which common sense and self-evident truths will not allow even the oppressive criminal justice system to sink. There might have been subtle factors that could be twisted to confuse a jury. However, manslaughter or negligent homicide were certainly one or two obvious crimes which they should have been convicted for.

There are difficult days and months and years ahead, but the leadership of the African-American community and other endangered minorities, because the same problem in New York City is a problem in the Hispanic community, it is a problem in the Asian community, these other minorities are equally endangered. All decent, caring citizens must not allow this outrage to continue. For as long as necessary, we must unite to persevere and unite to push for justice.

Let me just pause for a moment before I ask my colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS), the gentleman from Queens (Mr. MEEKS), to join me. Let me just pause and repeat what I said before.

There are a set of demands that were made in connection with the Amadou Diallo killing. On Saturday, March 27, 1999, that is a little less than a year ago, a group of people in New York City met about the Amadou Diallo case. They drew up a set of demands at that time. I am going to read those demands, those 10 demands.

As I said before a few minutes ago, these ten demands which were set forth on March 27 of 1999 were demands, most of which had been repeated over and over again for the last 40 years. The characters change. There is a different mayor now, but previous mayors have been approached in the same way.

Mayor Giuliani in this case was asked to immediately implement the recommendations of the Mollen Commission, which existed for a long time. They called a long time ago for the establishment of an independent investigative body with full subpoena power that had jurisdiction over police corruption and police brutality in New York City.

Twice the City Council of New York has passed legislation creating a body to monitor corruption, but the mayor has done everything in his power to block its implementation, the present mayor, first by veto, and then when the Council overrode his veto, by tying the matter up in court.

The mayor must also implement the recommendations from both the majority and dissenting reports of his own task force that he appointed in 1997 in the wake of the shocking Abner Louima incident.

Abner Louima was a Haitian immigrant who was lucky that he did not lose his life after having been grossly abused in the police station. Only the hard work of a hospital which was able to deal with the damage done to his internal organs saved his life, and he at least is alive today, but there are probably few police brutality victims who have lived after experiencing such horror.

The second demand made this time, and it has been made for the last 40 years, was that a civilian complaint review board be immediately appointed. We had one that was dismantled by this present mayor; that it be immediately reappointed, that it be strengthened and fully funded, so it can effectively investigate civilian complaints of police misconduct.

The civilian complaint review board has been on the table for 40 years. For 40 years this reasonable proposal has been frustrated and distorted, and we have had enough. There are members of our community that we have appealed to, not to get irrational, not to be emotional, do not become violent, do not do anything outrageous, that would injure and harm individuals or groups or

the image of our city or the image of our neighborhoods.

Let us all be rational and reasonable. Let us understand that we are all disciples of Martin Luther King, and non-violence is the way to work out these kinds of problems. They are waiting for us to work them out. We have made these reasonable demands for 40 years, and for 40 years we have not been able to make any headway.

The third demand, the State legislature must pass legislation creating a special prosecutor for police brutality and corruption in New York. In conjunction with this, the State Attorney General must create a special unit on police misconduct, and should issue an annual report documenting instances of misconduct throughout the State.

This was a reasonable demand made by reasonable people, and they have ignored it. Only under great pressure, only under great pressure did the last Governor, Governor Cuomo, appoint a special prosecutor in the horrifying Griffeth case, where a man was chased to his death on a highway, but that was an exception to the rule. Why not as a rule do what is rational and reasonable; understand that the District Attorneys cannot effectively prosecute the police? They work with the police every day. They are not in a position to prosecute the police. There is a gross conflict of interest that we cannot overcome.

Item four, the police department must develop a comprehensive training program, developed in consultation with outside experts, to school its officers in racial and cultural sensitivity, and must also implement a rigorous process of in-depth psychological screening of its recruits and officers.

I can only tell the Members that I know police officers who say that when this effort was made, under pressure, with one of the two teams that they pretended to introduce comprehensive training related to racial and cultural sensitivity, that it has been a big joke. The police force has laughed it into oblivion. They do not take it seriously because the command from the top does not make themselves take it seriously. This is a reasonable demand.

Demand number four is a reasonable demand. Why is it not met? Why do they not respond to reasonable demands?

Demand number four, the New York Police Department should reflect the makeup of the citizen population it serves. New York City police officers should live in New York City. The State legislature should immediately pass a law mandating residency for city officers.

This is a reasonable demand. I ask Members, anywhere in America, is this an unreasonable demand? In most of our counties and cities throughout the United States there is a requirement that police officers and other civil servants live in the community. New York City is the exception. New York City is the exception even in New York

State, where most jurisdictions require that their local police live in their jurisdiction, that they live in the city or county that they serve.

Why is New York City an exception? Because the power brokers in New York are such that they were able to force the State, to get the State legislature to pass laws which exempt New York City. They cannot do what other places in New York State can do. They cannot require a residency law.

The City Council of New York City has on several occasions passed laws which require police to live in the city; not to disrupt the lives of existing police officers and say, if you are a police officer now you have to move back into the city. No. It has been very generous, and they only require new recruits to. Anybody coming into the police department as a new recruit must live in the city.

The City Council passed it, it has gone to the State legislature, and it refuses to pass it.

One of my close colleagues, Assemblyman Al Vann, has recently offered legislation again in the New York State Assembly. It has no chance of passing by the Republican-controlled Senate or being signed by the Governor.

This is a reasonable demand. This is the way it is done in most of America. Why cannot the power brokers, the mayor, the Governor of New York city and New York State, respond in a reasonable way to reasonable demands?

Demand number six, the police commissioner must also take specific and immediately steps to recruit more minorities and women to serve as police officers and develop a plan to increase promotion opportunities for women and minority officers.

This is a reasonable demand, that we have recruiting programs to get more minorities. The number of minorities in the police force has gone down over the last two decades instead of up. The number of minorities, Hispanic and black, are less now in the upper ranks than they were 10 years ago. We have obviously not had a sincere effort by the police department and the city administrations to meet this kind of reasonable demand.

Demand number seven, who can disagree with demand number seven, that the salary and benefits for police officers must be improved? Law enforcement officers are entrusted with extraordinary responsibilities and they should be compensated accordingly.

Traditionally, New York City police officers have certainly not been underpaid when compared to the surrounding suburbs, but now their pay is falling behind. We think that the recruitment problem of high-quality people, whether they are white or African-American or Hispanic, the recruitment of high-quality people is enhanced by maintaining decent salaries and benefits, and certainly the members of the police department do not disagree with us on that one.

However, we see no special effort to package the police benefits and salaries and the recruitment program in a way to attract more minorities to the present police structure.

Demand number eight, the police department's 48-hour rule, which delays the ability of the New York Police Department investigators to question any police officer charged with violations of New York Police Department rules and regulations, must be eliminated. They have 48 hours in which they cannot question a police officer in New York. If something goes wrong, he has 48 hours to get his story together. We cannot question him until the 48-hour period has elapsed.

Demand number nine, that weapons, ammunition, and tactics used by the department must be assessed and periodically reviewed, not only to measure effectiveness, but to protect the safety of innocent New Yorkers. The use of hollow point bullets should be discontinued immediately. That is point number nine.

I must congratulate the mayor and the city administration for responding to point number nine. After the death of Amadou Diallo, at least there has been a restriction on the use of hollow point bullets. So we have ten demands, and one, there has been a reasonable effort made to try to comply with it.

Point number 10 is addressed not to the mayor of New York City, but to the Congress. Congress must call on the Justice Department to honor its commitment to monitor and issue annual reports documenting instances of police misconduct throughout the country. This promise was made in the wake of the Rodney King incident, and has yet to be acted upon.

The Justice Department is still too timid in its approach to the violation of civil rights and human rights of citizens across the country by police and the criminal justice system. These are reasonable demands, and when we tell our people in our districts, be reasonable, do not get too emotional, we are going to resolve this problem through nonviolent, legal, rational means, we are going to negotiate it through, as leaders we would like some response from the other side of the table.

The other side of the table not only includes Mayor Giuliani, in the case of New York City, not only includes Governor Pataki, but the whole power structure of New York, the businessmen and what we call the permanent government of New York.

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Certain organizations and institutions sit there year after year as we make these demands and they put no pressure on to make certain that reasonable responses are made to reasonable demands. They are as guilty as the public officials who year after year, administration after administration, ignore these reasonable demands.

At this point, I would like to yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr.

MEEKS), my colleague from Queens, who is also a member of the Task Force on Police Brutality of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I compliment my colleague, the gentleman from New York, (Mr. OWENS) for his very eloquent statement. As indicated, I am the cochair of the Congressional Black Caucus's Task Force on police brutality. And just late last year as a task force, we traveled and conducted four hearings around this country; one here in Washington, D.C.; one in New York City; one in Chicago, Illinois; and one in Los Angeles, California.

The theme of the testimony that we heard was the same. There seems to be a pervasive police mentality that is going on across this Nation that is very Bull Connor'ish, particularly in the African-American and Latino communities.

There was a cry throughout all of these hearings, and there were a number of other cities, major urban cities throughout this country that were crying for us to come to their cities too to conduct such hearings in which we would have heard the same type of testimony.

As a result of the Congressional Black Caucus and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. CONYERS), the ranking member of the Committee on the Judiciary, and a number of organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Council of La Raza, the National Urban League, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the time is right, based upon the debate that we just heard from the gentleman from New York, the time is right now for us in Congress to move and pass some aggressive legislation that will begin to address this police mentality that is Bull Connor'ish.

Mr. Speaker, it will also do something to bring people together as opposed to divide us. The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. CONYERS) is sponsoring a bill very shortly that all Members of this House need to join in support of called the Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act of 2000.

This bill will create a national minimum standard for law enforcement agencies to meet. It provides tools for developing better operations, enhances the tools and resources available to the Federal Government as well as individual citizens to investigate and stop police misconduct, and addresses a number of issues such as deaths in custody, racial profiling, and abuses by the Immigration and Naturalization and Customs Services that have traditionally plagued Americans of color.

The time is right. It is within our national interest to have an accreditation of law enforcement agencies. There are currently no national standards and, as a result, there are huge discrepancies between law enforcement agencies and policies dealing with everything from the use of force to handling of citizen complaints.

Included in these new uniform standards would be early warning programs, civilian review procedures, traffic stop documentation and procedures, administrative due process requirements and training. The bill also provides for law enforcement development plans, management schemes, managements like the new management standards will deal with administrative due process, residency requirements, as the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) was talking about, compensation and benefits, use of force, racial profiling, early warning programs, and civilian review boards.

It will deal with training of law enforcement agencies and it will require standards in the areas of the use of lethal and nonlethal force dealing with law enforcement misconduct, including excessive force, racial profiling, and how police officers communicate with the public.

Recruitment: Law enforcement agencies will also be required to look at policies relating to recruitment and hiring a diverse force that is representative of the communities they serve. They develop valid job-related educational and psychological standards and initiatives to encourage residency and continuing education.

Oversight: Law enforcement agencies will be required to look at how they handle citizens' complaints with the potential establishment of civilian review boards and the implementation of early warning programs and administrative due process. There will be administrative due process procedures. There will be enhanced funding to combat police misconduct; enhanced authority in practice and pattern investigations.

There will be a study of deaths in custody. There will be a deprivation of rights under the color of law, a national task force on law enforcement and oversight.

An immigration enforcement and review commission should be established, as well as Federal data collection on racial profiling.

These are some of the items that will be covered in this bill that the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. CONYERS) will be coming out with very shortly called the Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act of 2000.

Let me move to the terrible situation, which is just a symptom of what is taking place across America, and that is the matter in regards to Amadou Diallo. I know some say that there was a jury and the jury was an integrated jury, but that is not all that matters in this particular case. What does matter, and I say this as a former prosecutor and an attorney, I know that a judge can charge one in to make one's case, or charge one out to lose their case. In listening to the charges of this judge, I knew immediately thereafter that tragedy and a miscarriage of justice would be had.

I find that a decision by the appellate division, which changed the venue of

this case, which virtually denied Mr. Diallo the opportunity of having this case judged by his peers, and even the police officers who were police officers of the City of New York, there should have been members of the jury from the City of New York. The changing of venue, in my opinion, was a miscarriage of justice.

What matters is that this jury, being from Albany, was not acquainted with the pattern and practice of police violence against minority communities in New York City. It simply cannot be that an innocent person standing at his own doorway, minding his own business, was shot down in a firing squad fashion and those who committed this act are not guilty of anything. Not even reckless endangerment.

Hundreds of millions of people around the world, who laud the virtues and the superiority of the American system of justice, can now see some hypocrisy of America's claims, particularly when it comes to people of color. All New Yorkers, indeed all Americans can also see this. And we see it, I see it, and some of the other hypocrisy of the mayor of the City of New York.

When a verdict suits the mayor, he praises the court system. But where a decision is contrary to what he wants, he calls judges and jurors silly and irresponsible.

We and our constituents will never forget that this mayor approved the creation of the Street Crimes unit that is over 90 percent white, no diversity, and that the mayor allowed it to operate under the slogan, "We own the night."

We should note with alarm the jubilation by many members of the police department in precincts around this city. Also note that it has been reported that the judge, after the verdict, went to a celebration party with the lawyers of the defendants. Imagine. Judges, police officers celebrating and forgetting that an innocent, unarmed man was killed.

Those who celebrate dismiss the death of Mr. Diallo and him as an innocent man make a mistake saying this will erase the unwarranted acts of a firing squad. Do those jubilant people believe that they made policing easier? That this is the way to garner the respect of New Yorkers? I submit not. I submit it is a Bull Connor'ish type mentality.

Have they forgotten that in New York City that a majority of the New Yorkers that they swore to defend and protect are, in fact, people of color? The killing of Amadou Diallo and the acquittal of the four police officers unfortunately follow a practice and pattern of police relations with the black and Latino community that has been in effect for a very long time.

Clearly, reforms are necessary and must be instituted with speed, courage, and determination. But it is clear that the administration of the New York City Police Department and the command structure there are incapable of

instituting meaningful reforms without Federal intervention.

The City of New York is hurting today. There is an open wound there. That wound was caused by the decision that sends a message that the police can in fact fire 41 bullets at an unarmed man of color as he enters his home. A healing of these wounds can only happen if the Justice Department conducts a thorough investigation of the violation of Mr. Diallo's civil rights.

In addition, as I said this morning, they must relentlessly evaluate and find just solutions to the patterns and practices of the New York City Police Department. If New York City is to heal, the message must be that all human life is valuable. The Justice Department is the only doctor that is available that can help us heal the wound of the City of New York.

I say to the rest of the citizens of New York, we must come together and arm ourselves with the ballot and go out this November, and every November thereafter, like we have never done in the history of this country. I yield back to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS), who is also cochair of the Congressional Black Caucus Task Force on Police Brutality. I just want to repeat for all, before I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS), my second colleague from New York, I want to repeat that the fact that we are talking about the verdict that the majority of New York City and New York State citizens consider to be a miscarriage of justice. We are talking about the fact that 10 reasonable demands that have been made for the last 40 years which, if they had been heeded, would have gone a long ways toward preventing what happened in the Amadou Diallo case.

We are talking about the fact that there are extremist elements in police departments, in law enforcement agencies. The rogue cops and the extremist elements, however, are aided and abetted by the cover-up procedure that takes place, from the commissioner and the mayor on down, when something goes wrong.

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The criminal justice system goes into motion to cover up these cases. Our appeal is to meet those 10 demands in the case of New York City. We will go a long ways toward seeing to it that this never happens again.

We also appeal for national action. Tomorrow, members of the Congressional Black Caucus will be meeting with the Justice Department to talk about their duty to intervene in this case, to follow through on the legislation that already exists, which enables them to investigate whether or not the civil rights of Amadou Diallo were violated. If they were violated, they can prosecute these same four policemen on the violation of the civil rights of Amadou Diallo.

We also would like national action in this Congress. My colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS), has said that the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) will be introducing a bill which is called the Law Enforcement Trust Integrity Act of 2000.

We would like to see a response from the entire Congress. This is a matter for the caring majority. All decent citizens should want to see to it that there are no further miscarriages of justice; all decent citizens who want to see to it that the rogue cops, the extremist elements of law enforcement, are isolated.

Mr. Speaker, beyond that, we want to let it be known that we are going to organize and appeal to the United Nations that the pattern of the violations that exist throughout the entire Nation, which ranges from Amadou Diallo's killing to the Los Angeles Police Department's confessions of gross brutality and miscarriages of justice to the fact that we have 2 million people in prison, most of whom are minorities, to the police profiling of the New Jersey State troopers, on and on it goes.

And we would like to raise this debate to a higher level and have the rest of the world look at the violations of human rights in America. Already Amnesty International has said that New York City has a pattern of police oppression which violates human rights.

I would like to yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS) who is from the 10th Congressional District.

Mr. TOWNS. Let me thank the gentleman for taking the time out. And I agree with the gentleman, this is something that needs to be done, and certain things need to be said.

I would also like to congratulate and thank my colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS), for the work that he has done in the area of police brutality, because, as you know, throughout this Nation, the problem of police brutality is something that we must begin to address.

I am really sad today. My heart is heavy, because when I think about what is happening in this Nation, even in the city that I am from, when I think about senior citizens, a lady 93 years old said to me that you cannot even trust the police.

I think on that note, the police department should support the Law Enforcement Trust Act, because I think that the police officers that are on the force that are doing what is right should recognize that those that are doing things that are not right also creates a kind of negative stigma for the whole department and for policemen everywhere.

I think that law enforcement authorities should support the Law Enforcement Trust Act. We have had too many situations where minorities, men of color and women of color, have been shot. You could call the roll.

I mean, in New York I was just sitting there thinking in terms of Eleanor

Bumpers, in terms of what happened to her, and Michael Griffin, then Randy Evans, I could go on and on, and, of course, Amadou Diallo.

All of these are names of people that have been killed by the police department. And we have not done a whole lot to correct this over the years. We have too many people who you talk to who have horror stories about the police.

You can talk to people on the street. People stop me all the time to tell me what happened to them. So profiling, let us face it, we might as well take our heads from out of the sand and from behind trees, and realize the fact that this is something that exists and let us now come together and work toward it.

We need to make certain that we have a program put in place that is going to monitor these kinds of issues, because when you have people talking about it on a regular basis, even at church they talk about the kinds of things that the police department is doing.

The people are now afraid of the police department, that is how bad things have gotten. And I think that those policemen of goodwill understand that and should now come forth and say yes, I really feel that something needs to be done, and it needs to be done now.

The Justice Department I think now has to step in, because of the tactics that have been used by the unit, in terms of street gang units, street police units. I think that a street crime unit, the kind of tactics that they are using, I think that the Justice Department should take a look at it, because all of these people that I talk to cannot be wrong.

If you just walk the streets of New York, in terms of the communities of color, they will tell you what the police are doing; how they were stopped and how they were asked all of these different questions. And the only reason that the person stopped them is because they happened to be of color.

I think the time has come in the United States of America where we must address that. Now, I know that it is not all police officers, and I don't want to stand here and indict all of them; but I think it is enough for us to stop at this point in time and begin to address it.

To the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) and those who are having police brutality hearings around this Nation, I think that you must continue until the message is heard all over that something needs to be done, and that the things that are going on with the street crime unit and all of these things that people are complaining about must be addressed.

I do believe that if we pay enough attention and we stop for a moment, we can do something about it. Too many people have been left with tears as a result of what has happened with the police department. It is always "I thought they had a this," "I thought they had a that."

I mean, I can tell you about the story of Randy Evans. No weapon. Police officer just shot him.

I think that we need to understand that we have to address those issues. We have to do it as quickly as possible.

Let me close by saying simply this to my colleagues, the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS), the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS), and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), who is also offering up the Law Enforcement Trust Act, I think the time has come to do that. I think that we can no longer afford the luxury of sitting back.

I think when we go to the Justice Department, we need to go with a clear message, in fact, that the street crime unit must be investigated, that tactics must be investigated. This kind of stuff should not go on in a civilized society.

So at this time I would like to yield back to the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) and say to him I really appreciate the work that he is doing.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from the 10th Congressional District in Brooklyn, New York (Mr. TOWNS). He mentioned Randolph Evans as an example of the police slaughter that has gone on over the last 30 years. Randolph Evans was a young man standing in a crowd on the grounds of a housing project. There was some kind of disturbance. The police officer walked up, he put a gun to his head, and shot him in front of a whole host of witnesses.

There was no defense for that. So they came up with a defense at the trial that the police officer suffered from psychomotor epilepsy. Psychomotor epilepsy. I have never heard the term since then. But he was acquitted as a victim of psychomotor epilepsy. He had taken the life of a young man, and he was acquitted. This shows my colleagues why we were so outraged many years later to find 41 shots being fired at Amadou Diallo.

The gentleman from the 10th Congressional District of Brooklyn and I also share another problem. In the New York Times yesterday there is a report of "High Infant Mortality Rates in Brooklyn" and how they mystify experts. In Brownsville, which is in my district, in Bedford-Stuyvesant, which is mostly in the district of the gentleman from New York (Mr. TOWNS), there is an alarming increase in the number of babies who are dying at birth. While all across the Nation there seems to be a decrease, there is an alarming increase in these two communities. It so happens these two communities are communities that have the largest number of welfare recipients in New York City. The third community suffering also is in the Bronx, a large number of welfare recipients.

The enforcement of the new Welfare Reform Act in New York City by Mayor Guiliani has been harsh and brutal. There is no mystery here. Mothers are suffering because of the harsh and brutal way in which the Welfare Reform Act is being implemented.

They are suffering from the lack of care. They are suffering from the fact that it is more difficult to get housing. It is more difficult to get help for their children. They are suffering because there is not enough day care.

So I started this discussion by saying that, whenever I come to the floor, I want to discuss the budget that we are getting ready to prepare, because the budget sets the tone for everything else we do and is important here in the House of Representatives.

The budget will guide the discussion leading to the appropriations process. The way we spend money tells the world what we think is important. We must spend money on better health care for these youngsters so at the beginning of their lives they have a chance.

We have a problem at the end, a problem with respect to young people like Amadou Diallo, Randolph Evans, and others. We do not want them to be cut down in the prime of their lives by irresponsible and reckless police officers. The rogue police officers, the extremist police officers must not be aided and abetted by the police department and the mayors and the governors and the judges. They must expose and isolate these rogue extremist elements within the application and law enforcement area throughout the Nation.

Thomas Jefferson said, "You have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

I congratulated the Congress when we started. Today we took a great step forward. We moved the cap on the earnings of senior citizens. We recognize that a long life should be rewarded. Every step should be taken to make that long life as pleasant as possible. But at the end of life or in the middle or in the beginning, it is all important and equal amounts.

We want to, all three of us, declare that for all those people in our districts and the rest of New York City and throughout the State and anywhere else in the country, we want to know what action you are going to take. We have told you we call for these demands to be met. We are appealing to the Justice Department to intervene.

We are going to take the case in some form to the United Nations. There was a demonstration on Saturday before the United Nations. That is just a beginning, because there are gross violations of human rights throughout the entire Nation.

We also are going to call for an activity and an action in which everybody can participate. We are going to call for an April week of caring majority nonviolent outrage. We had a day of outrage once in New York City. They know what that means. We are calling for an April week of caring majority nonviolent outrage where all of the citizens of New York, black and white, can express themselves. That effort will be followed by demands that the negotiations be met.

In the last 40 years, more than 50 outrageous killings of New York City citizens by the police have gone unpunished. From the children, Clifford Glover, and Randolph Evans, to grandmother Eleanor Bumpers who was killed in her own living room, mental patient Gideon Bush, and immigrant Amadou Diallo, the careless actions of individual policemen have been supported and excused by a collaborating judicial system and by the establishment press and media, by the power brokers, and the governors of New York City.

We declare that the caring majority of New York City will no longer surrender to these gross injustices. We are going to take action until they yield on our reasonable demands.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the article in the New York Times that appeared February 29, 2000, which talks about the "High Infant Mortality Rates In Brooklyn Mystify Experts" as follows:

[From the New York Times, Feb. 29, 2000]

HIGH INFANT MORTALITY RATES IN BROOKLYN
MYSTIFY EXPERTS

(By Jennifer Steinhauer)

In central Brooklyn—where storefronts are boarded, housing projects stand in defiant opposition to the boom times, and the hospitals are more or less broke—babies are dying at rates that the city as a whole has not seen in nearly two decades. And they die, in some cases, at a rate double what the federal government has set as the infant mortality goal for the nation.

Often, they die months before they were meant to be born, their bodies a tangle of minute bones and skin, weighed in grams rather than pounds. Some never see their mother's faces; they are gone right after birth. Others leave the hospital with a shopping bag of drugs and a mother overwhelmed by her own myriad problems, and do not make it to their first birthday.

While the infant mortality rate in New York has fallen steadily in the last decade, it has fallen much more slowly in neighborhoods like Bedford-Stuyvesant and Brownsville, neighborhoods with considerable populations of new immigrants.

In New York City in 1988, babies less than a year old died at a rate of 6.8 per 1,000 which is slightly better than the national average, 7.2. Bedford-Stuyvesant, however, has one of the highest rates in the country, 14 per 1,000, a 20 percent increase over 1997. The last time the average rate of infant mortality was that high in New York City over all was 1983.

That the number is on the rise at all is startling. It stands against the national trend even in cities with severe social problems, like Washington, where the rate is 12.5 per 1,000.

In Brownsville, the story is much the same; the rate slides up and down each year, averaging about 10 deaths per 1,000 babies in the last five years. While the disparity between children of black and white mothers has always been stark, there is evidence that the gap is closing elsewhere in the city. The infant mortality rate in the Tremont section of the Bronx, for example, is 8.1, a 54 percent decrease from 1988.

The figures have so concerned the city's health commissioner, Dr. Neal L. Cohen, that he has made reducing infant mortality one of his top priorities for this year.

There seems to be no clear answer to why the same neighborhoods stand out year after

year, and why some would buck the downward trends. Experts seem to agree that even when the resources exist—prenatal care at low cost, hospitals willing to deliver babies, government-subsidized infant formula and food—it is still profoundly difficult to get many pregnant women through the doors.

"It is perplexing question," said Dr. Katherine La Guardia, who runs the ambulatory obstetrics and gynecology clinic at Brookdale University Hospital and Medical Center in Brownsville. "A huge amount of effort has gone into improving prenatal care, but we still don't know how one reaches the most unreachable."

Those are the mothers who are addicted to drugs, who are H.I.V. positive, unemployed or living in New York as illegal immigrants. Women who fit those descriptions often avoid going to see doctors before they give birth out of fear, experts said, that their babies will be taken from them or that they will be deported. Others are discouraged by family members, who do not believe in prenatal care or are suspicious of the entire medical system.

"The question is, how do we make women less afraid to get care," Dr. La Guardia said.

Other mothers want prenatal care but cannot get it because they live too far from a health clinic or hospital, or have small children and no one at home to care for them while they make the trek to the doctor.

There are also anomalies that cannot be readily explained. For instance, neighborhoods with a high concentration of immigrants from the Caribbean seem to report the highest infant mortality figures. "What is interesting about Bedford is that 42.1 percent of the women are foreign-born," said Dr. Tanya Pagan Paggio, an associate professor of medicine at the City University of New York.

"This is important because when you look at other places in the city where there is a high level of foreign-born, infant mortality rates are closer to 6 percent," Dr. Paggio said. "In Bedford, there are a lot of Caribbean people. And we know that Jamaican women have a 9.4 per 1,000 rate, Haitian women have about 11 per 1,000 and rates among women from Trinidad and Tobago are also high. You have to wonder if these women have access to service they need."

Robin Bennett is desperate not to let her baby become another sad statistic. At 23, she is pregnant with her fourth child, a baby with a heart condition. One son is in foster care, and the other lives with her mother. Her daughter, who is 18 months old, lives with Ms. Bennett in a government-subsidized apartment in Bedford-Stuyvesant.

Her problems are as complicated as they are numerous: her apartment is full of bugs that bite her baby, she said, adding that one of her children was a result of a rape. Her mother, who has AIDS, is her main line of support.

"Sometimes I cry at night because I wonder if the stress in my life gave this baby her hole in her heart," Ms. Bennett said. She finds herself gravitating to Brooklyn Perinatal Network, an organization that tries to keep babies like Ms. Bennett's from dying by shepherding women into prenatal care, advocating for them on housing issues and giving other social support.

In fact, a lack of access to housing, nutritious food and adult support may contribute to infant mortality as much as poor medical care, many experts say.

"Prenatal care has probably been overstated," said Dawn Misra, an associate professor at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and an expert on infant mortality. "If you look at a program like Healthy Start, you see it is a broader initiative with resources like food, social support and other

things like smoking cessation clinics, which is import because smoking may lead to low-birth-weight babies, and low birth weight is the leading cause of infant mortality."

When Bedford-Stuyvesant lost a majority of its financing in 1997 for Healthy Start, a federal program intended to help poor women have healthy babies, the infant mortality rate shot up, said Ngosi Moses, who runs the Brooklyn Perinatal Network. "When resources became scarce, those rates rose," Ms. Ngosi said. "This shows you when money is put into the community, good things happen, and when the money is pulled out, they go out."

The \$6.8 million that was spread over 22 programs in the early 1990's now has to cover 94 programs.

Brownsville is a neighborhood that a decade of economic expansion seems to have left untouched, where Healthy Start does not even exist. Rows of private homes are boarded up, and stores are scarce, save for a few of the dollar-bin variety.

The number of people, especially women, who are infected with the AIDS virus is "astounding," Dr. La Guardia said.

In most hospitals in the city, it is almost a given that a mother will leave the maternity ward with a healthy baby in her arms. In Brownsville, it is often just short of a victory.

Dr. La Guardia and her boss, Dr. Martin Gimovsky, who heads the obstetrics department at Brookdale, spend their days trying to unravel the histories and medical problems of the poor women who come through its clinics and labor and delivery floor each day. Many have never had a day of prenatal care.

On a recent Wednesday afternoon, during Dr. Gimovsky's clinic for women with high-risk pregnancies, dozens of women crammed into a waiting room. Almost all of them had had children before, including the recently homeless woman with AIDS who did not know her due date and had had virtually no prenatal care.

"You've gained weight," the resident said reassuringly.

"Well, I'm living somewhere now, so I am much more relaxed," said the woman, who would not give her name.

Cynthia Martinez, who has three children and is pregnant with a fourth, still calls her first baby, the one who was stillborn, by her name, Cynthia Michelle. "She is 10 now," she said. The baby stopped moving at 7 months, and by the time Ms. Martinez delivered her, the doctors told her she was dead.

Distraught, Ms. Martinez said that she grabbed the baby of the woman she shared a room with when it was brought in for a feeding and refused to let her go. "I just kept saying, 'You can't take this baby from me,'" Ms. Martinez, 24, said. "I guess I thought she was mine. My mother told me that God had taken one from me but would give me more."

Few patients at Brookdale, one of the city's most financially strained hospitals, pay the full price of their care, if they pay at all. Many are covered by the Prenatal Care Assistance Program, a state-financed program for poor pregnant women.

"We work with the patients no one wants," said Dr. Gimovsky, a plump and congenial doctor, who jokes easily with the teenage girls who fill the cramped clinic space. He recruited Dr. La Guardia by likening her work to that of the Peace Corps. "You don't make any money at this," he said cheerfully, "but this is what I want to do with my life."

Although the infant mortality rates in Brownsville are historically lower than in Bedford-Stuyvesant, the March of Dimes earmarked the neighborhood for a \$152,000 program to try to get more services to women. It is also pushing legislators in Albany to

raise the maximum income women may earn and still qualify for prenatal care.

Dr. La Guardia has been at Brookdale for only a few months. Unlike Dr. Gimovsky, she is businesslike, almost stern, and deeply weary over the hospital's dire fiscal situation.

"I am still in shock," she said. Money would permit the hiring of more doctors and nurses. Ultrasound machines, standard equipment in any Manhattan obstetrics office, are scarce. A portable ultrasound, the latest in technology, is unheard of.

"Clearly, there are more dollars that need to be funneled into this area," Dr. La Guardia said. "You wonder if there is any hope."

SENIOR CITIZENS' FREEDOM TO WORK ACT PASSED TODAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KUYKENDALL). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, the Social Security earnings limit is a very outdated provision in the Tax Code. In fact, it goes back to the Great Depression. It was designed at that time to open up more jobs for young people during the Great Depression. The idea was that this would force seniors out of the workforce by putting this special earnings limit on them. But today in this era of low unemployment and in this era of much longer life spans, seniors should be welcome to stay in America's workforce.

What we did today in this House is to pass a bill that repeals this penalty on senior citizens who make the choice to continue to work. This was long overdue. Our seniors have worked their entire lives to build our country into what it is today. It is wrong for the Government to force them to choose between contributing to society or receiving their full Social Security checks.

In my home State of California alone, there are more than 161,000 seniors affected by the Social Security earnings test that were penalized by that test.

1700

If this legislation is passed by the Senate and signed into law, that means all these Californians over the age of 64 will be able to continue adding to our economic productivity while keeping all of their Social Security. These are individuals who paid into Social Security on the assurance that their money would be there when they retired.

The idea that the Federal Government can withhold access to their money, frankly, is outrageous. However, this is precisely what the Federal Government has done with the earnings test. It is denying seniors the benefits that they have paid for. It is denying them their earned right, and this is wrong.

With this booming economy and tightening of the labor force, the Federal Government should not discourage Americans from working. Rather, it

should encourage people to be more productive. By repealing the earnings limit, more individuals will now work, pay more social security taxes, increase Federal revenues, and improve economic efficiency. America would also benefit from older workers' valuable work experience and work skills.

The earnings test discriminates against those who must work to supplement their benefits, because only wages are counted for purposes of this test. Income from hard-earned paychecks should not be treated less fairly than income from investment, and that is another reason why we needed to repeal it.

Repealing the Social Security earnings limit will also eliminate the need to recalculate affected retirement credits and benefits. And how much would that save a year? One hundred fifty million dollars annually is spent by the bureaucracy in doing this calculation.

Now, I constantly hear from seniors in my district about this issue. Whenever we hold a town meeting, or if we stop at a senior center or community center, the issue of allowing senior citizens to work without losing Social Security comes up.

Senior citizens have a place in our society and in our work force, and no one should ever discourage or deny that. It is unfair for the government to penalize them for wanting to work, and that is why the best thing we can do to honor seniors and their contributions is to repeal this senseless outdated earnings limit.

So, Mr. Speaker, I hope the Senate and the President move quickly on this legislation that we have passed today and which I coauthored.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. DOGGETT) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. WEYGAND, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CUMMINGS, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. CARSON, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. SOUDER) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mrs. CHENOWETH-HAGE, for 5 minutes, March 8.

Mr. BILBRAY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FOLEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PAUL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. WALSH, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SOUDER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. METCALF, for 5 minutes, today.

BILLS PRESENTED TO THE
PRESIDENT

Mr. THOMAS, from the Committee on House Administration, reported that that committee did on the following date present to the President, for his approval, a bill of the House of the following title:

On Tuesday, February 29, 2000:

H.R. 149. To make technical corrections to the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 and to other laws related to parks and public lands.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 03 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, March 2, 2000, at 10 a.m.

RULES AND REPORTS SUBMITTED
PURSUANT TO THE CONGRES-
SIONAL REVIEW ACT

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(d), executive communications [final rules] submitted to the House pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1) during the period of July 15, 1999 through January 24, 2000, shall be treated as though received on March 1, 2000. Original dates of transmittal, numberings, and referrals to committee of those executive communications remain as indicated in the Executive Communication section of the relevant CONGRESSIONAL RECORDS.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS,
ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

6385. A letter from the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting notification concerning the Department of the Air Force's Proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance (LOA) to Israel for defense articles and services (Transmittal No. 00-23), pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2776(b); to the Committee on International Relations.

6386. A letter from the Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting notification concerning the Department of the Air Force's Proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance (LOA) to Egypt for defense articles and services (Transmittal No. 00-29), pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2776(b); to the Committee on International Relations.

6387. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting Copies of international agreements, other than treaties, entered into by the United States, pursuant to 1 U.S.C. 112b(a); to the Committee on International Relations.

6388. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting a report consistent with the War Powers Resolution regarding U.S. military forces in East Timor; (H. Doc. No. 106-203); to the Committee on International Relations and ordered to be printed.

6389. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier Model DHC-7-100 Series Airplanes [Docket No. 99-

NM-107-AD; Amendment 39-11526; AD 2000-02-07] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6390. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; General Electric Company GE90 Series Turbofan Engines [Docket No. 99-NE-62-AD; Amendment 39-11496; AD 99-27-15] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6391. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A340-211, -212, -213, -311, -312, and -313 Series Airplanes [Docket No. 99-NM-336-AD; Amendment 39-11495; AD 99-27-14] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6392. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; Fokker Model F27 Mark 050 Series Airplanes [Docket No. 99-NM-236-AD; Amendment 39-11494; AD 99-27-13] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6393. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier Model CL-600-2B19 (Regional Jet Series 100) Series Airplanes [Docket No. 98-NM-192-AD; Amendment 39-11510; AD 2000-01-12] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6394. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; Raytheon Model BAe.125 Series 1000A and 1000B Airplanes and Model Hawker 1000 Series Airplanes [Docket No. 99-NM-80-AD; Amendment 39-11499; AD 2000-01-02] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6395. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; de Havilland Model DHC-8-100, -200, and -300 Series Airplanes [Docket No. 98-NM-179-AD; Amendment 39-11531; AD 2000-02-13] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6396. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; Fairchild Aircraft, Inc. SA226 and SA227 Series Airplanes [Docket No. 98-CE-84-AD; Amendment 39-11507; AD 98-19-15 R1] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6397. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300 B2-1A, B2-1C, B2-203, B2K-3C, B4-103, B4-2C, and B4-203 Series Airplanes [Docket No. 99-NM-24-AD; Amendment 39-11498; AD 2000-01-01] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6398. A letter from the Program Analyst, Department of Transportation, transmitting

the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300, A300-600, and A310 Series Airplanes [Docket No. 2000-NM-09-AD; Amendment 39-11522; AD 2000-02-04] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6399. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; Agusta S.p.A. (Agusta) Model AB412 Helicopters [Docket No. 98-SW-69-AD; Amendment 39-11528; AD 2000-02-09] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6400. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; Eurocopter Deutschland GmbH Model MBB-BK 117 Helicopters [Docket No. 99-SW-60-AD; Amendment 39-11509; AD 2000-01-11] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6401. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; Dornier Model 328-100 Series Airplanes [Docket No. 99-NM-219-AD; Amendment 39-11527; AD 2000-02-08] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6402. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; Cessna Aircraft Company Model 182S Airplanes [Docket No. 98-CE-125-AD; Amendment 39-11532; AD 2000-02-14] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6403. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; British Aerospace (Jetstream) Model 4101 Airplanes [Docket No. 99-NM-306-AD; Amendment 39-11524; AD 2000-02-05] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6404. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; Agusta S.p.A. Model A109A and A109A II Helicopters [Docket No. 99-SW-91-AD; Amendment 39-11493; AD 99-27-12] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6405. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300 B4-600R and A300 F4-600R Series Airplanes [Docket No. 99-NM-130-AD; Amendment 39-11488; AD 99-27-07] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6406. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300 B4-203 Series Airplanes [Docket No. 99-NM-327-AD; Amendment 39-11490; AD 99-27-09] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6407. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 757-200,

-200PF, and -200CB Series Airplanes Powered by Rolls-Royce RB211-535C/E4B Turbofan Engines [Docket No. 98-NM-323-AD; Amendment 39-11487; AD 99-27-06] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6408. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; CFE Company Model CFE738-1-1B Turbofan Engines [Docket No. 99-NE-39-AD; Amendment 39-11497; AD 99-27-16] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

6409. A letter from the Program Analyst, FAA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule—Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 777-200 and -300 Series Airplanes [Docket No. 99-NM-323-AD; Amendment 39-11456; AD 99-25-13 C1] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received February 11, 2000, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. ARCHER: Committee on Ways and Means. H.R. 5. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to eliminate the earnings test for individuals who have attained retirement age; with an amendment (Rept. 106-507). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. COMBEST: Committee on Agriculture. H.R. 3615. A bill to amend the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 to ensure improved access to the signals of local television stations by multichannel video providers to all households which desire such service in unserved and underserved rural areas by December 31, 2006; with an amendment (Rept. 106-508 Pt. 1). Ordered to be printed.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. SMITH of Texas (for himself, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. MCCOLLUM, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. CANNADY of Florida, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, and Mr. SCARBOROUGH):

H.R. 3767. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to make improvements to, and permanently authorize, the visa waiver pilot program under section 217 of such Act; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HORN:

H.R. 3768. A bill to require that any city that is completely surrounded by any other city must be assigned its own ZIP codes; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Mr. PAUL:

H.R. 3769. A bill to prohibit the destruction during fiscal year 2001 of intercontinental ballistic missile silos in the United States; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. JACKSON of Illinois (for himself and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY):

H.R. 3770. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide for the applicability to operators of Internet Web sites of restrictions on the disclosure or records and other information relating to the use of such sites,

and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BERMAN:

H.R. 3771. A bill to eliminate the numerical limitation on the number of aliens granted asylum who may become lawful permanent residents in any fiscal year; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 3772. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on pigment yellow 199; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 3773. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on pigment blue 60; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 3774. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on solvent violet 13; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 3775. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on solvent blue 67; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 3776. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on pigment yellow 147; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COBLE:

H.R. 3777. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on pigment yellow 191.1; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COLLINS (for himself, Mr. KUYKENDALL, Mr. BOEHNER, and Mr. MATSUI):

H.R. 3778. A bill to amend the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States to provide duty-free treatment for, and clarify the classification of, machines and components used in the manufacture of digital versatile discs (DVDs); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COLLINS (for himself, Mr. KUYKENDALL, Mr. BOEHNER, and Mr. MATSUI):

H.R. 3779. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on machines, and their parts, for use in the manufacture of digital versatile discs (DVDs); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COLLINS (for himself, Mr. KUYKENDALL, Mr. BOEHNER, and Mr. MATSUI):

H.R. 3780. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on machines, and their parts, for use in the manufacture of digital versatile discs (DVDs); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COLLINS (for himself, Mr. KUYKENDALL, Mr. BOEHNER, and Mr. MATSUI):

H.R. 3781. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on machines, and their parts, for use in the manufacture of digital versatile discs (DVDs); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COLLINS (for himself, Mr. KUYKENDALL, Mr. BOEHNER, and Mr. MATSUI):

H.R. 3782. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on machines, and their parts, for use in the manufacture of digital versatile discs (DVDs); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COLLINS (for himself, Mr. KUYKENDALL, Mr. BOEHNER, and Mr. MATSUI):

H.R. 3783. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on machines, and their parts, for use in the manufacture of digital versatile discs (DVDs); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COLLINS (for himself, Mr. KUYKENDALL, Mr. BOEHNER, and Mr. MATSUI):

H.R. 3784. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on machines, and their parts, for use in the manufacture of digital versatile discs

(DVDs); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COLLINS (for himself, Mr. KUYKENDALL, Mr. BOEHNER, and Mr. MATSUI):

H.R. 3785. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on machines, and their parts, for use in the manufacture of digital versatile discs (DVDs); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COLLINS (for himself, Mr. KUYKENDALL, Mr. BOEHNER, and Mr. MATSUI):

H.R. 3786. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on machines, and their parts, for use in the manufacture of digital versatile discs (DVDs); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COLLINS (for himself, Mr. KUYKENDALL, Mr. BOEHNER, and Mr. MATSUI):

H.R. 3787. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on machines, and their parts, for use in the manufacture of digital versatile discs (DVDs); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COLLINS (for himself, Mr. KUYKENDALL, Mr. BOEHNER, and Mr. MATSUI):

H.R. 3788. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on machines, and their parts, for use in the manufacture of digital versatile discs (DVDs); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COLLINS (for himself, Mr. KUYKENDALL, Mr. BOEHNER, and Mr. MATSUI):

H.R. 3789. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on machines, and their parts, for use in the manufacture of digital versatile discs (DVDs); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COLLINS (for himself, Mr. KUYKENDALL, Mr. BOEHNER, and Mr. MATSUI):

H.R. 3790. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on machines, and their parts, for use in the manufacture of digital versatile discs (DVDs); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COLLINS (for himself, Mr. KUYKENDALL, Mr. BOEHNER, and Mr. MATSUI):

H.R. 3791. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on machines, and their parts, for use in the manufacture of digital versatile discs (DVDs); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COLLINS (for himself, Mr. KUYKENDALL, Mr. BOEHNER, and Mr. MATSUI):

H.R. 3792. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on machines, and their parts, for use in the manufacture of digital versatile discs (DVDs); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COLLINS (for himself, Mr. KUYKENDALL, Mr. BOEHNER, and Mr. MATSUI):

H.R. 3793. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on machines, and their parts, for use in the manufacture of digital versatile discs (DVDs); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COLLINS (for himself, Mr. KUYKENDALL, Mr. BOEHNER, and Mr. MATSUI):

H.R. 3794. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on machines, and their parts, for use in the manufacture of digital versatile discs (DVDs); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. COLLINS (for himself, Mr. KUYKENDALL, Mr. BOEHNER, and Mr. MATSUI):

H.R. 3795. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on machines, and their parts, for use in the manufacture of digital versatile discs

(DVDs); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. DANNER:

H.R. 3796. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on 2-Methyl-4-chlorophenoxyacetic acid; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. DANNER:

H.R. 3797. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on 2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic acid, its salts and esters; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. FORBES (for himself, Mr. NADLER, Mr. OWENS, and Mr. ACKERMAN):

H.R. 3798. A bill to amend section 211 of the Clean Air Act to prohibit the use of MTBE as a fuel additive, to amend the Solid Waste Disposal Act to accelerate the cleanup of MTBE released from leaking underground storage tanks, and to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to assist communities with MTBE contamination in drinking water supplies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce.

By Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts:

H.R. 3799. A bill to amend chapter 171 of title 28, United States Code, to allow members of the Armed Forces to sue the United States for damages for certain injuries caused by improper medical care; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GIBBONS (for himself and Ms. BERKLEY):

H.R. 3800. A bill to establish a panel to investigate illegal gambling on college sports and to recommend effective countermeasures to combat this serious national problem; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GREENWOOD:

H.R. 3801. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on Iminodisuccinate; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. GREENWOOD:

H.R. 3802. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on Iminodisuccinate salts and aqueous solutions; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself and Mr. SPENCE):

H.R. 3803. A bill to suspend until June 30, 2003, the duty on transformers for use in certain radiobroadcast receivers capable of receiving signals on AM and FM frequencies; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself and Mr. SPENCE):

H.R. 3804. A bill to suspend until June 30, 2003, the duty on transformers for use in certain radiobroadcast receivers with compact disc players and capable of receiving signals on AM and FM frequencies; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. MILLER of Florida:

H.R. 3805. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on polyvinylchloride (PVC) self-adhesive sheets; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. MINK of Hawaii:

H.R. 3806. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to add certain identifying information to the inscriptions on the markers on certain graves in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific containing the remains of certain unknowns who died in the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. MOAKLEY (for himself, Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. OLVER, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. WEYGAND, Mr. BALDACCI, and Mr. GEJDENSON):

H.R. 3807. A bill to amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to ensure that petroleum importers, refiners, and wholesalers accumulate minimally adequate supplies of home heating oil to meet reasonably foresee-

able needs in the northeastern States; to the Committee on Commerce.

By Mr. MOLLOHAN:

H.R. 3808. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on BEPD 2-Butyl-2-ethylpropanediol; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mrs. MORELLA (for herself, Mrs. THURMAN, Mr. MOAKLEY, and Mr. FRANKS of New Jersey):

H.R. 3809. A bill to amend chapter 4 of title 39, United States Code, to allow postal patrons to contribute to funding for organ and tissue donation awareness through the voluntary purchase of certain specially issued United States postage stamps; to the Committee on Government Reform.

By Mr. NEY:

H.R. 3810. A bill to permit any individual who has attained 62 years of age to engage in recreational fishing in navigable waters in any State without obtaining a license; to the Committee on Resources.

By Mr. PASCRELL:

H.R. 3811. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude certain severance payment amounts from income; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. PELOSI (for herself, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. INSLEE, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. MATSUI, Mrs. MORELLA, and Mr. ROMERO-BARCELO):

H.R. 3812. A bill to create incentives for private sector research related to developing vaccines against widespread diseases and ensure that such vaccines are affordable and widely distributed; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on International Relations, and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ROTHMAN:

H.R. 3813. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on cyclohexadec-8-en-1-one (CHD); to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. SMITH of Texas (for himself, Mr. CAMPBELL, Mr. CANNON, and Mr. GOODLATTE):

H.R. 3814. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act with respect to the number of aliens granted nonimmigrant status described in section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, to implement measures to prevent fraud and abuse in the granting of such status, to provide for expedited processing of certain employers' petitions with respect to aliens seeking such status, to increase, and modify the use of, fees paid by employers petitioning with respect to such aliens, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Science, and Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SMITH of Washington:

H.R. 3815. A bill to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the design, planning, and construction of a project to reclaim and reuse wastewater within and outside of the service area of the Lakehaven Utility District, Washington; to the Committee on Resources.

By Mr. STUPAK (for himself, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. COYNE, Ms. CARSON, Mr. EVANS, Mr. FILNER, Ms. MCKINNEY, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. REYES, Mr. FROST, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Mr. RODRIGUEZ, Ms. BERKLEY, and Mr. QUINN):

H.R. 3816. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide that a stroke or

heart attack that is incurred or aggravated by a member of a reserve component in the performance of duty while performing inactive duty training shall be considered to be service-connected for purposes of benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. TANCREDO:

H.R. 3817. A bill to redesignate the Big South Trail in the Comanche Peak Wilderness Area of Roosevelt National Forest in Colorado as the "Jaryd Atadero Legacy Trail"; to the Committee on Resources.

By Mr. THOMAS (for himself and Mr. PASCRELL):

H.R. 3818. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on octylmethoxycinnamate; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. WOLF (for himself, Mr. DAVIS of Virginia, and Mrs. MORELLA):

H.R. 3819. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against income tax for expenses incurred in teleworking; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. PAUL (for himself, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. ROHRBACHER, Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi, Mr. METCALF, and Mr. HUNTER):

H.J. Res. 89. A joint resolution withdrawing the approval of the United States from the Agreement establishing the World Trade Organization; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. LANTOS (for himself, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. CAMPBELL, Mr. CONDIT, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. FORBES, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. KOLBE, Ms. LEE, Ms. LOFGREN, Mrs. MINK of Hawaii, Mrs. MORELLA, Mr. NADLER, Ms. PELOSI, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. WEINER, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. KUCINICH, and Mr. PASTOR):

H. Con. Res. 259. Concurrent resolution expressing the concern of Congress regarding human rights violations against lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgendered individuals around the world; to the Committee on International Relations.

By Mr. BONILLA (for himself, Mr. DELAY, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. CUNNINGHAM, Mr. WICKER, Mr. ISTOOK, Mrs. NORTHUP, Mr. DICKEY, Mr. GOSS, Mr. PEASE, Mr. TANCREDO, Mr. WALDEN of Oregon, Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. WHITFIELD, Mr. GREEN of Wisconsin, Mr. GIBBONS, Mr. BUYER, Mr. GANSKE, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. BARR of Georgia, Mr. COMBEST, and Mrs. MYRICK):

H. Con. Res. 260. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration require ample public comment and a sound scientific basis for its recently proposed regulation on ergonomics; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. CROWLEY (for himself, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. BONIOR, Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island, Mr. DEFAZIO, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. WYNN, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. JACKSON of Illinois, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. WEINER, Mr. ROEMER, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. LAMPSON, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. ROMERO-BARCELO, Mr. DINGELL, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. MEEHAN, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. FORBES, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. CAPUANO, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. ROTHMAN, Ms. BERKLEY, Ms.

DELAURO, Mrs. LOWEY, Ms. VELAZQUEZ, Mr. GREEN of Texas, Mr. BALDACCIO, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. NADLER, Mr. LARSON, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. DIXON, Mr. WEXLER, and Mr. HOLT):

H. Con. Res. 261. Concurrent resolution condemning the discriminatory practices prevalent at Bob Jones University; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LANTOS (for himself, Mr. GILMAN, Mr. GEJDENSON, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. CAMPBELL, Mr. WEINER, Mr. HORN, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mrs. MORELLA, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. ABERCROMBIE, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. PORTER, Mr. EVANS, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. TIERNEY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Mrs. JONES of Ohio):

H. Res. 429. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives concerning the participation of the extremist FPO in the government of Austria; to the Committee on International Relations.

By Mr. FROST:

H. Res. 430. A resolution commending the paralegals of the United States and supporting a National Paralegals Day; to the Committee on Government Reform.

PRIVATE BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 3 of rule XII, private bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. DICKEY:

H.R. 3820. A bill to provide for the liquidation or reliquidation of certain entries of carbides; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. PASCRELL:

H.R. 3821. A bill to provide for the liquidation or reliquidation of certain color television receiver entries to correct an error that was made in connection with the original liquidation; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 7: Mr. CAMP.
 H.R. 72: Mr. OWENS and Mr. SMITH of Texas.
 H.R. 73: Mr. GOSS.
 H.R. 148: Mr. ADERHOLT and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.
 H.R. 218: Mr. FRANKS of New Jersey.
 H.R. 254: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. BAKER, and Mr. MCINTOSH.
 H.R. 303: Mr. LEWIS of Georgia and Mr. HILLEARY.
 H.R. 325: Mr. FORBES.
 H.R. 380: Mr. WALDEN of Oregon and Mr. MANZULLO.
 H.R. 390: Mr. SANDERS.
 H.R. 460: Mr. HOLDEN, Ms. CARSON, Mr. COOK, and Mr. HASTINGS of Florida.
 H.R. 531: Mr. COX, Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. HAYES, and Mr. KINGSTON.
 H.R. 534: Mr. TIERNEY and Mr. TANCREDO.
 H.R. 583: Mr. MEEHAN and Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts.
 H.R. 632: Mr. BILBRAY.
 H.R. 637: Ms. DELAURO.
 H.R. 638: Mr. OSE, Mr. BAKER, and Mr. FROST.
 H.R. 750: Mr. EDWARDS.
 H.R. 783: Mr. BROWN of Ohio and Mr. JENKINS.

H.R. 826: Mr. MORAN of Kansas and Mr. WISE.

H.R. 979: Mr. FROST, Mr. POMEROY, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. PAYNE.

H.R. 1020: Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota and Mr. MATSUI.

H.R. 1041: Mr. PAUL, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. GILLMOR, Mr. KINGSTON, Mr. CRANE, and Mr. BONILLA.

H.R. 1071: Ms. DELAURO, Mr. WATT of North Carolina, Mr. TRAFICANT, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. BORSKI, Mr. McDERMOTT, and Mr. ORTIZ.

H.R. 1079: Mrs. WILSON, Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin, and Mr. COYNE.

H.R. 1093: Mr. YOUNG of Florida.

H.R. 1111: Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mr. BALLENGER, Mr. HERGER, Mr. COYNE, and Mr. PASCRELL.

H.R. 1182: Mr. TRAFICANT.

H.R. 1196: Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 1216: Mr. FORD, Mr. WALSH, Mrs. WILSON, and Mr. MASCARA.

H.R. 1285: Mr. GREEN of Texas.

H.R. 1288: Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California.

H.R. 1322: Mr. LATOURETTE, Mr. STUMP, and Mr. ROGAN.

H.R. 1396: Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. CUMMINGS, and Mr. SCOTT.

H.R. 1488: Mr. PHELPS.

H.R. 1592: Mr. EVERETT, Mr. KASICH, and Mr. COX.

H.R. 1606: Mr. FORD.

H.R. 1621: Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mrs. MEEK of Florida, Mr. FARR of California, and Mr. DIXON.

H.R. 1644: Mr. COSTELLO and Mr. CRANE.

H.R. 1681: Mr. WYNN.

H.R. 1747: Mr. WALDEN of Oregon and Mr. BOEHNER.

H.R. 1795: Mr. ENGEL, Mr. COX, Mr. OWENS, Mr. ROMBERO-BARCELO, Mr. WEYGAND, Mr. FORBES, Mr. HINCHAY, Mr. GOODLING, Mr. SEXTON, and Mr. GOODE.

H.R. 1843: Mr. WATT of North Carolina.

H.R. 1870: Mr. WOLF, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. COSTELLO, Mrs. THURMAN, and Mr. REYES.

H.R. 2060: Mr. GILMAN.

H.R. 2200: Mr. BOEHLERT.

H.R. 2233: Mr. WATT of North Carolina.

H.R. 2258: Ms. DELAURO and Ms. MCKINNEY.

H.R. 2265: Mr. LIPINSKI.

H.R. 2282: Mr. WELDON of Florida.

H.R. 2335: Mrs. CEHNOWETH-HAGE, Mr. RADANOVICH, Mr. DOOLITTLE, and Mr. HANSEN.

H.R. 2340: Mr. SALMON and Mrs. JONES of Ohio.

H.R. 2341: Mr. TURNER and Mr. HALL of Ohio.

H.R. 2355: Mr. BOSWELL.

H.R. 2356: Mr. PETERSON of Minnesota.

H.R. 2362: Mr. TANCREDO and Mr. RYUN of Kansas.

H.R. 2372: Mr. COBLE, Mr. NEY, Mr. BUYER, Mr. TANNER, and Mr. SHOWS.

H.R. 2382: Mr. DELAY and Mrs. THURMAN.

H.R. 2498: Mr. TANCREDO, Mr. FOSSELLA, and Mr. GONZALEZ.

H.R. 2535: Mr. BLAGOJEVICH and Mr. OLVER.

H.R. 2562: Mr. BALLENGER.

H.R. 2571: Mr. CAPUANO and Mr. ANDREWS.

H.R. 2594: Mrs. JONES of Ohio.

H.R. 2631: Mr. FORD, Mr. RANGEL, and Mr. THOMPSON of California.

H.R. 2640: Mr. GEJDENSON and Mr. TERRY.

H.R. 2651: Mr. TERRY.

H.R. 2733: Mr. UPTON.

H.R. 2865: Ms. MCKINNEY.

H.R. 2891: Mr. BOUCHER.

H.R. 2899: Mr. TOWNS.

H.R. 2900: Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. McDERMOTT, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. HOLT, Mr. DIXON, Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, and Mr. SMITH of Washington.

H.R. 2907: Mr. KUCINICH.

H.R. 2911: Mr. SHOWS.

H.R. 2934: Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. LAFALCE, Mr. OLVER, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. BERMAN, Ms. MCKINNEY, and Mr. JACKSON of Illinois.

H.R. 2991: Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, and Mr. HULSHOF.

H.R. 3091: Ms. CARSON, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. WU, Ms. ESHOO, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, and Mr. SWEENEY.

H.R. 3105: Mr. WEXLER.

H.R. 3115: Mr. JACKSON of Illinois.

H.R. 3132: Mr. GEJDENSON and Mr. STUPAK.

H.R. 3148: Mr. TOWNS.

H.R. 3174: Mr. THORNBERRY.

H.R. 3180: Mr. CLEMENT.

H.R. 3193: Ms. SLAUGHTER.

H.R. 3195: Ms. STABENOW, Mr. EVANS, and Mr. FROST.

H.R. 3242: Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma and Mr. CRAMER.

H.R. 3293: Mr. SISISKY, Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. BECERRA, Mr. BOEHLERT, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mrs. THURMAN, Mr. WELLER, Mr. ROGAN, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. WICKER, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. MCINTOSH, Mr. SERRANO, Ms. MCKINNEY, Mr. SWEENEY, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. EHRlich, Mr. GREEN of Texas, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. HILL of Indiana, Mr. PACKARD, Mr. MASCARA, Mr. LAMPSON, and Mr. MCNULTY.

H.R. 3295: Ms. ESHOO and Mr. POMEROY.

H.R. 3377: Mr. KILDEE, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, and Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts.

H.R. 3396: Ms. PELOSI, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mrs. TAUSCHER, and Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD.

H.R. 3430: Mr. LANTOS, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. STUPAK, and Mr. MCNULTY.

H.R. 3445: Mr. SAXTON.

H.R. 3449: Mr. HOLDEN and Mr. SHAYS.

H.R. 3485: Mr. SALMON.

H.R. 3504: Mr. FATTAH.

H.R. 3518: Mr. EHLERS, Mr. NORWOOD, Mr. COOK, and Mr. BEREUTER.

H.R. 3543: Mr. LUCAS of Kentucky and Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 3573: Mr. CALVERT and Mr. KANJORSKI.

H.R. 3575: Mr. SHAYS and Mr. KOLBE.

H.R. 3576: Mr. NEY, Mr. PICKERING, Mr. GOODE, Mr. SOUDER, Mr. BAKER, Mr. BEREUTER, and Mr. HAYES.

H.R. 3582: Mrs. MYRLICK and Mr. COOK.

H.R. 3590: Mr. CUNNINGHAM.

H.R. 3607: Mr. FROST.

H.R. 3608: Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. QUINN, and Mr. WYNN.

H.R. 3614: Mr. CASTLE, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. HALL of Ohio, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. BRYANT, Mr. SPRATT, Mr. GILCHREST, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. WISE, Mr. CANADY of Florida, Mrs. MORELLA, Mr. WHITFIELD, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. NORWOOD, Mr. PHELPS, Mr. HALL of Texas, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. BOEHLERT.

H.R. 3615: Mr. CRAMER, Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma, Mr. GUTKNECHT, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. STENHOLM, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. KLINK, and Mr. COBLE.

H.R. 3620: Mr. GOODLING.

H.R. 3621: Mr. SKELTON, Mr. ROEMER, Mrs. KELLY, Ms. DANNER, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska, and Mr. HILL of Indiana.

H.R. 3625: Mr. BONILLA and Mr. COOKSEY.

H.R. 3629: Mr. BEREUTER.

H.R. 3634: Mr. EVANS, Mr. DEFazio, and Ms. SLAUGHTER.

H.R. 3641: Mr. MALONEY of Connecticut, Mr. BOEHLERT, and Mrs. ROUKEMA.

H.R. 3650: Mr. WU, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, and Mr. BROWN of Ohio.

H.R. 3655: Mrs. EMERSON, Mr. SANDLIN, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. SPRATT, Mr. MCINTYRE, Mrs. MINK of Hawaii, and Mr. FROST.

H.R. 3660: Mrs. CHENOWETH-HAGE, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. MICA, Mr. HALL of

Ohio, Mr. BARR of Georgia, Mr. OXLEY, Mr. GARY MILLER of California, Mr. LINDER, Mr. PETRI, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, Mr. SCHAFFER, Mr. STEARNS, Mr. COMBEST, Mr. METCALF, Mr. MOLLOHAN, and Mr. HUTCHINSON.

H.R. 3662: Mr. WEYGAND, Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. BALDACCI, Mr. MCNULTY, and Mrs. JONES of Ohio.

H.R. 3680: Mr. DAVIS of Virginia, Mr. INSLEE, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mrs. KELLY, Ms. DUNN, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. FROST, and Mrs. MYRICK.

H.R. 3688: Mr. UDALL of Colorado.

H.R. 3695: Mr. RYUN of Kansas and Mr. HOSTETTLER.

H.R. 3700: Mr. ROMERO-BARCELO, Mr. BARRETT of Wisconsin, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. GILMAN, Mr. MCNULTY, Mr. LAMPSON, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. SWEENEY, and Mr. FROST.

H.R. 3766: Mr. BLAGOJEVICH, Mr. COYNE, Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. HALL of Ohio, and Mr. PAS-TOR.

H.J. Res. 48: Mr. HASTINGS of Washington and Mr. UDALL of Colorado.

H. Con. Res. 108: Mr. MCNULTY and Mr. FROST.

H. Con. Res. 182: Mr. COOK.

H. Con. Res. 220: Mr. OWENS and Mr. LEVIN.

H. Con. Res. 252: Mr. BENTSEN, Mr. FROST, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mrs. NORTHUP, Mr. EHLERS, Mrs. BIGGERT, Mr. SHAYS, Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut, Mr. BEREUTER, Mr. HORN, Mr. DREIER, Mr. PACKARD, Mrs. BONO, Mr. HULSHOF, and Mr. WATKINS.

H. Con. Res. 253: Mr. BLILEY.

H. Res. 107: Mr. JEFFERSON, Mr. NADLER, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. HOEFFEL, Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon, and Mr. POMEROY.

H. Res. 187: Mr. ABERCROMBIE.

H. Res. 238: Mr. UPTON.

H. Res. 332: Mr. PORTER, Mr. PETRI, and Mr. METCALF.

H. Res. 397: Mrs. THURMAN.

DELETIONS OF SPONSORS FROM PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were deleted from public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 1304: Mr. DELAHUNT.

DISCHARGE PETITIONS— ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS

The following Members added their names to the following discharge petitions:

Petition 7, by Mr. SHOWS on House Resolution 371: Maurice D. Hinchey, John Elias Baldacci, Harold E. Ford, Jr., Nita M. Lowey, Major Owens, Jesse L. Jackson, Jr., Sanford D. Bishop, Jr., Peter A. DeFazio, Ron Klink, Gerald D. Kleczka, William O. Lipinski, William (Bill) Clay, Loretta Sanchez, Martin Olav Sabo, and Edward J. Markey.

Petition 8, by Mr. STARK on House Resolution 372: Maurice D. Hinchey, John Elias Baldacci, Harold E. Ford, Jr., Nita M. Lowey, David D. Phelps, Edward J. Markey, Jesse L. Jackson, Jr., Major Owens, Sanford D. Bishop, Jr., Peter A. DeFazio, Ron Klink, Gerald D. Kleczka, William O. Lipinski, William (Bill) Clay, Martin Olav Sabo, and Ike Skelton.