

workforce policy, including introduction of pre-tax benefits as a component of compensation, and personnel elements written into the legislation creating the new Department of Homeland Security. For his contributions John received the Director's Award for Excellence in October 2002.

John retired from OPM in January 2003, but his newly won status was short-lived when he was approached by the Director as her choice to represent the agency with our Committee. I am very grateful that John placed his dedication to public service above his own well-earned interests by accepting the appointment. During the past two years his expertise contributed directly to our key initiatives including establishing the new National Security Personnel System for the Department of Defense, improving benefits for Federal employees and retirees, and providing diligent oversight of personnel management across the Government.

On January 7 of this year, John completed his last day of service with the Committee and resumed his status as "retired." I believe John really means it this time, and we promise not to further interrupt his plans. On behalf of our entire Committee, I express deep appreciation to John for his superb service to our Nation, and I wish him many happy and healthy years ahead to enjoy with his wife Rita and their family.

FLIGHT OF FREEDOM—A JOURNEY TO SAVE JOBS

HON. GREG WALDEN

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 1, 2005

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw my colleagues' attention to the "Flight of Friendship—A Journey To Save Jobs", which is a heart-warming effort underway in the great state of Oregon. The Flight of Friendship is a people-to-people effort by individuals in Oregon who are coming together to provide an economic lifeline to people in Thailand who work in or are dependent upon the tourism industry for their livelihood. Tourism is recognized as one of the key industries in the tsunami-affected area that provides sustainable jobs and the one that can be jump-started by the return of tourists as in this Flight of Friendship.

The Flight of Friendship's formal mission is an admirable one: In the aftermath of the catastrophic tsunami that struck South Asia on December 26, the natural reaction for us was to do something, anything, that would bring some measure of relief to those in the affected areas. We wanted to do something NOW because we have such a feeling of urgency.

Many of us may not have the skills to rebuild communities or repair broken bones or care for orphaned children, but we do know that our humanity has a purpose. When we can take our time and provide a conduit for information and give face-to-face support by traveling to those areas and help those who need to stay working, we know we are giving something that matters. We can help tell the world that these restaurants, hotels and entertainment venues are open and ready to receive visitors.

Flight of Friendship will focus on cities and regions that depend on the tourist trade for

economic survival. We hope that Oregon's lead and example will challenge others from around the U.S.—private citizens and the travel industry as well, to follow. We encourage people to visit these beautiful, intriguing places and extend an economic lifeline. Flight of Friendship is a journey to save jobs.

Under the leadership of Oregonians Sho Dozono, Joe D'Alessandro and Elaine Franklin, over 100 business and political leaders from the state of Oregon will travel to Thailand this month in a significant effort to help re-establish that country's tourism industry and keep vital jobs in place. I would like to commend every person associated with the Flight of Friendship for his or her dedication to making a real difference.

TRIBUTE TO DR. DAVID LIEBER

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 1, 2005

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, Mr. WAXMAN and I pay tribute today to a remarkable individual and a dear friend, Dr. David Lieber. Dr. Lieber will be joined by his colleagues, family and friends on February 10, 2005, at a special University of Judaism dinner to celebrate his 80th birthday. The dinner's theme, "Walking Humbly with God," is especially fitting given the enormity of Dr. Lieber's accomplishments and the humility for which he is well known.

Since 1956 when Dr. Lieber was appointed Dean of Students of the nine-year-old University of Judaism (UJ), he has been a driving force for improvement and expression. He helped transform the University from a Hebrew Teachers Institute that offered adult classes in what is now known as Korea Town into a nationally recognized educational institute complete with an undergraduate college, graduate programs in education, business administration, Jewish studies and rabbinic studies, a large library and two think tanks. He served as University President for an impressive twenty nine years until he retired in 1993.

Dr. Lieber continues to be intellectually and spiritually inspirational to the Jewish community. Since his retirement as University President, he dedicated himself to assembling a superb team of scholars and produced Etz Hayim: Torah and Commentary, a work that makes it possible for millions to benefit from his knowledge and dedication. We have known him for many years and have great respect for his wisdom and guidance.

Throughout his lifetime, Dr. Lieber has worked on behalf of many issues of importance to the Jewish people. He is past president of the Rabbinical Assembly and served on the Assembly's Executive Committee. He chaired its Strategic Planning Committee which evaluated needs of the religious body into the year 2000. He is an ordained Rabbi and former spiritual leader of Sinai Temple in Los Angeles 1950–1954. He served as Chaplain for B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation at both the University of Washington and Harvard University. In recognition of his work, he was awarded a Doctor of Humane Letters degree, honoris causa by Hebrew Union College in 1982 and the Torch of Learning Award by Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1984.

Dr. David Lieber received a BA, magna cum laude, in 1944 from College of the City of New

York and a Bachelor of Hebrew Letters from Jewish Technological Seminary of America. In 1947 he was awarded a Master's degree from Columbia University and received a Doctor of Hebrew Literature Degree from Jewish Theological Seminary in 1951.

Dr. Lieber and his accomplished wife, Dr. Esther Lieber, were married June 10, 1945, are the proud parents of Michael, Deborah, Daniel, and Susan. They have twelve beautiful grandchildren.

It is our distinct pleasure to ask our colleagues to join us in saluting our dear friend Dr. David Lieber and the institution he built for our children and generations to come.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 1, 2005

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, due to circumstances affecting the health of a family member, I was not present for rollcall vote Nos. 7 through 13 on January 6, 25 and 26. Had I been present, I would have voted "no" with reservations on rollcall vote No. 7, "yea" on rollcall vote No. 8, "yea" on rollcall vote No. 9, "yea" on rollcall vote No. 10, "yea" on rollcall vote No. 11, "yea" on rollcall vote No. 12, "no" on rollcall vote No. 13.

WOMEN AND SOCIAL SECURITY

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 1, 2005

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to denounce the fake Social Security crisis that President Bush is trying to sell to the American public.

As the new Democratic Chair of the Women's Caucus, I am especially concerned because women and children are the first targets to be thrown off the lifeboat.

We expect women to raise families, support elderly family members and take care of children.

But, women lose more years of retirement savings when they stop working to raise kids or take care of parents.

Therefore, they depend more on Social Security when they retire. Social Security has been a strong program for its beneficiaries. In my district in East Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Valley in LA County, there are 59,525 Social Security beneficiaries who rely heavily on their hard-earned monthly Social Security benefits. The average Social Security benefit for these individuals living is \$787 a month.

If we are looking at just retired workers alone, they only receive \$540 a month. For many people, particularly Latinos and other minorities, this benefit is their only source of income. My district is very diverse. Sixty-two percent is Latino, and 18 percent is Asian. Forty-one percent of elderly Latinos have Social Security as their only means of income. Without Social Security, over half of America's Latino elderly would live in poverty. Social Security is especially important for minority women.

They will be left most vulnerable to the Republican privatization scheme because they

earn less on the dollar as to other women. Without Social Security, 61 percent of Latinas over the age of 65 would live below the poverty line. Social Security has been the most successful anti-poverty program perhaps ever to be undertaken. According to a report released today by the National Women's Law Center, the typical widow receives a benefit of \$865 per month. I am frightened to think that Republicans want to strip women of their earned benefits simply because they live longer.

Without Social Security benefits, the poverty rate for unmarried women would be about 60 percent instead of the current 16 percent! But under the leading Republican privatization plan, the benefit would be only \$476 per month. This amount is equal to only 65 percent of the poverty line! Women account for 70 percent of all Social Security beneficiaries older than 85. Women still earn less than men—73 cents to the dollar—and minority women face even larger disparities in wages.

Privatization means that women who are on the edge of poverty living in my district would be at the mercy of an unpredictable stock market. Without guaranteed benefits, these women would be forced to live day-to-day, just trying to put food on the table. These women would lose the "security" from Social Security! Democrats believe that all American workers should get the benefits they paid for.

We want to save, strengthen, and secure Social Security for the future generations. Our senior citizens and future generations should not be guinea pigs for a political experiment. Just like the non-existent weapons of mass destruction—you have been told a scary story by the Republican majority and President Bush. Let me assure you—Social Security is not in a crisis. Democrats will fight to protect your earned benefits.

ORANGE COUNTY GROUNDWATER REPLENISHMENT SYSTEM

HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 1, 2005

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a bill to support the Orange County Groundwater Replenishment System. This bill is identical to the one I introduced in the 108th Congress as H.R. 1156, which passed the House by voice vote under Suspension of the rules last year.

The bill would increase the authorized Federal share for the Orange County California Groundwater Replenishment (OCGWR) System from \$20 million to \$80 million. This will allow Orange County to complete this important and much-needed project, which will serve about 2.3 million residents of north and central Orange County, and it will create a new water supply of 72,000 acre-feet per year.

The OCGWR project is not just important to Orange County, California, but also to the entire western United States. By recycling our own water, we in Orange County would not have to rely so heavily on water from the Colorado River Aqueduct or the San Francisco Bay Delta.

Moreover, the OCGWR is a highly innovative recycling project—a pilot project for other future water recycling projects. Experts in pub-

lic water management systems, from other States and from countries from around the world, have come to Orange County to look at the tertiary cleaning system that we have. The project is of national and even international significance.

This is a straightforward and reasonable bill. Its passage would simply bring the Federal share of funding closer to 25 percent, the level at which almost every other reclamation project is funded under Federal water reclamation and conservation programs.

This project, and this legislation, has received strong support from Members on both sides of the aisle. As I mentioned previously, the Committee on Resources very generously allowed this same bill to be considered under Suspension of the Rules last year. I would like to take this opportunity to again thank Chairman POMBO from California, Ranking Member RAHALL from West Virginia, as well as former Subcommittee Chairman CALVERT and Ranking Member NAPOLITANO of California for their overwhelming support of this bill.

I would also like to thank my colleagues from Orange County for their continued support. Mr. MILLER, Mr. COX, Mr. ROHRBACHER and Mr. ROYCE are strong supporters of this project. Securing funding for the OCGWR has always been, and will continue to be, a bipartisan effort.

Lastly, let me thank Orange County Water District President Phil Anthony, former OCWD Board Chair Denis Bilodeau, and General Manager Virginia Grebbien for their hard work and leadership in groundwater recycling. Their innovation has put Orange County in the forefront of water recycling and groundwater replenishment technology.

I look forward to working on passing this legislation with all of my colleagues, and I thank them again for their continued support.

REINTRODUCTION OF THE ORAL HEALTH PROMOTION ACT

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 1, 2005

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I want to announce today the reintroduction of the Oral Health Promotion Act, a bill I previously sponsored in the 107th Congress. I will reintroduce this bill tomorrow and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me as original cosponsors on this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, oral health care in the United States is in a sad state of decay. Congress cannot neglect it any longer. While the number of Americans without private health insurance of any kind is staggering enough at over 45 million, the number of Americans without private or public dental insurance is more than two times that figure. One hundred and eight million Americans—at last count—had no dental insurance at all: no coverage for emergency services, no coverage for fillings, no coverage for braces, no coverage for check-ups. Amazingly, despite great advances in oral health sciences, the Surgeon General has reported that tooth decay has become the single most common chronic childhood disease—five times more common than asthma and seven times more common than hay fever.

What does our neglect of oral health cost us? Surveys have shown that dental problems

cause children to miss more than 51 million hours of school and adults to miss more than 164 million hours of work each year. That's a lot of lost education, lost productivity and lost pay. And let's be clear—lack of access to dental care does not strike evenly across the socioeconomic spectrum. According to the U.S. Surgeon General:

Poor children suffer twice as many cavities as their more affluent peers, and their disease is more likely to be untreated.

Poor children suffer nearly 12 times more restricted-activity school days than children from higher-income families. (In my own state, which is doing a lot better than the national average on many oral healthcare indicators, a recent study found that 23 percent of children in grades 1–3 experienced 82 percent of all decay found.)

Medicaid has not been able to fill the gap in providing dental care to poor children: Fewer than one in five Medicaid-covered children received a single dental visit in a recent year-long study period.

For each child without medical insurance, there are at least 2.6 children without dental insurance.

For every adult 19 years or older with medical insurance, there are three without dental insurance.

Obviously, there are a lot of factors at play in this problem. But when it comes down to what we can do to increase access to dental care for the largest number of people, the solution, I think, already exists. While many other dental providers close the door to Medicaid and uninsured patients, often because they do not receive adequate reimbursement for the services they provide, Federally Qualified Community Health Centers provided dental services to millions and millions of them last year. Currently, over 1,000 community, migrant, and homeless health centers serve over 15 million people in 3,600 urban and rural communities in every State and territory.

It is clear that focusing on expansion of the dental care infrastructure through these and similar community-based providers will get us the biggest bang for our buck. Community health centers—which serve all patients in their communities regardless of their ability to pay—are on the front lines of getting dental care to those who are least likely to get it, namely those on Medicaid and those with no insurance at all. A lot of praise has been showered on this successful program for many years and from both sides of the aisle, including from President Bush, and rightly so. Now I think we really need to put our money where our mouths are and fund the creation of more dental care infrastructure based on the community health care model.

That is why I am introducing the "Oral Health Promotion Act" to address our national crisis in access to dental care. This bill will make a serious commitment to developing a dental health care infrastructure across our country and expand access to high-quality, affordable dental and health care for all Americans. It will:

(1) Create a \$140 million fund for the workforce, capital and equipment needed to establish or expand oral health services at community health centers, school-based dental centers (and other community-based sites) across the country;

(2) Provide states with an enhanced federal match (FMAP) for agreeing to cover full adult dental benefits under the Medicaid program;