

“Dear Congressman CUELLAR, As a member of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, I am writing to urge you please oppose any legislation or plan that would divert dedicated Social Security payroll taxes into private individual accounts or in any way harm the benefits, structure or traditional role of Social Security.”

As you know, President Roosevelt and Congress created Social Security in 1935 to protect retired Americans from experiencing a poverty ridden old age. And America's more than 35 million seniors have invested their hard earned money into Social Security during their long working lives. Social Security represents a covenant between government and its citizens. I therefore stand against the administration's policy and plans to reform Social Security through partial privatization or any other plan that would undermine the promise of the program's full guaranteed lifetime benefits.

One of my top priorities as a citizen and a voter is the protection of Social Security benefits for all current and future retirees. I sincerely hope among your top priorities as an elected official that you will also help defeat the privatization and other proposals that threatened our retirement security.

I urge you to work closely with the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare and protect the benefits we have worked for, paid for and have earned. Very sincerely, Mr. Hector MacDonald” from Laredo, Texas.

Again, I have received many letters like this, and I think this letter, Mr. Speaker, speaks for itself. I received over 400 letters like this one opposing the privatization of Social Security.

I have taken the time to read these letters, and I have taken a great deal of time to carefully review the proposal and listen to all sides of the debate; and after a thorough analysis I have come to see clearly that this proposal to privatize Social Security does not pass my legislative test. That is, it will not make our families stronger.

The current proposal to privatize Social Security jeopardizes our safety net by pulling the security out of Social Security. It takes our guaranteed benefits and gambles them on a stock market. It threatens to pose benefit cuts, raising the retirement age. And finally it assures adding a tremendous sum to our existing \$7 trillion debt.

Social Security has always been the one source free from risk and designed to reserve as a bedrock guarantee for our seniors.

The system was created and has served for generations as social insurance, not social investment; and we owe it to ourselves and our children, especially our seniors, to preserve that bedrock guarantee.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO UNITED STATES GROUP OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC ASSEMBLY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to 22 United States Code, 1928a, the order of House of January 4, 2005, and clause 10 of rule I, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Members of the House to the United States Group of the North Atlantic Assembly:

Mr. TANNER of Tennessee,
Mr. ROSS of Arkansas,
Mr. CHANDLER of Kentucky,
Mrs. TAUSCHER of California.

FIGHTING TERRORISM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. 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 the subject of this special order.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. DAVIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, this is an exciting time in the history of the United States, in the history of the world, and in the advancement of freedom.

This afternoon a member of minority made a statement that this war was not a war of choice. Contrary to that opinion, which certainly one has a right to share in this body, I would remind all Members of this House and the people that this was in fact a war that was chosen by Osama bin Laden and even before that by people like Saddam Hussein, those who have subjugated and terrorized their people for decades and even generations.

Osama bin Laden turned his hatred on America after we responded to the request of the Saudi and Kuwaiti governments after Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. His aggression was one of the key sparks in the current activities that we find ourselves engaged in right now.

This is a decisive time. In fact, we face the most serious threat to our freedoms and our liberties that we have faced since the end of the Second World War. We are fighting an enemy who has proven it will use whatever violent means necessary to further its cause. Indeed, we are not going to lose because of military strength, but we would lose only if the people of the United States have a loss of resolve.

My encouragement is to stay the course. As we see the development over the past several months around the world there are many, many things to be hopeful for. We recoil in horror at the report of suicide bombers and

strolling into crowded markets or onto packed buses and detonating themselves. Are they primarily focusing on our soldiers? No. The preponderance of casualties are attacks on their own people. In fact, this is not an insurgency in the classic sense. It is led by frankly a group of thugs, people filled with hatred, bitterness, criminals by any measure of merit, killing innocent men, women and children.

We watch in stunned belief when such a terror group announces it has taken hostage Americans or others who are innocent, working in Iraq peacefully to make it a safe place. A place where people can wake up in the morning, go to work, provide for their families, and then come home for a peaceful dinner, which so many of us, the vast and overwhelming majority of citizens in the United States, enjoy.

But our hearts swell glancing at pictures of the 8 million Iraqis who risked their lives to vote for a better way of life, one that does not include violence and brutal dictators. Every person who had the courage in his or her hearts to dip his or her finger in the purple ink on January 30 to vote in Iraq's first democratically held elections in decades, took a courageous stand for freedom and liberty and we applaud that.

I proudly joined my colleagues yesterday to pass the Emergency Wartime Supplemental Budget which we approved 388 to 43. The supplemental provides for \$76.8 billion in defense spending for pay, benefits, supplies and equipment for our troops because we will assure that our troops have the training, the tools and the equipment that they need to carry on to victory in this war.

We needed to move quickly to secure this money and we could not afford to wait for the budget process to wind its way to a finish. The military has told us they needed the funds by May 1 and Congress just cannot move that quickly on the entire defense appropriations bill.

The supplemental is money well spent to show our soldiers that we fully support them and that we are doing everything we can to provide for their safety. It shows our commitment to both our allies and also we show our enemies that we mean business, that we will continue to fight. We will pursue them in every corridor where they exist and, finally, win this war on terror.

This is not a fight we will lose, again, I reiterate because of military strength or lack of it. It is a fight that we can only lose if we choose to walk away, and we must not walk away.

This is a revolutionary time throughout the world. In the entire latitude 10-40 window, the doors of freedom are opening for the first time in decades, for the first time in history in some cases. We are seeing the fruit of the valor of our men and women in uniform in the developments in Lebanon, the developments in Egypt, the developments in Saudi Arabia. It is an exciting