

SOCIAL SECURITY CRISIS

□ 1030

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

Mr. CANTOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the crisis in Social Security. The current system in place is based on demographics in America that are reflective of 1935, not 2005.

Currently, 45 percent of senior citizens rely on Social Security as their sole source of income. We, in this House, will not let them down. We also cannot lose sight of our goal, though, to preserve Social Security for our children and our grandchildren.

Our goal in this Congress, as leaders, is to help real people, not engage in political posturing. It is our duty as public servants to ensure a strong and solvent program. For today's seniors and those nearing retirement, the system should not change. But we owe those younger workers across America and our future generations more than just a stopgap fix. We owe them the best system that we can provide to suit their needs in their golden years.

SENATE FILIBUSTER

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

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul? Mr. Speaker, what does it profit one political party to rule this government with an iron fist and destroy the foundation our Founding Fathers built? This is the central question we are asking the Senate Republican conference today.

It is unreal. It is unbelievable that Senators sworn to uphold the Constitution would end filibusters on judicial nominations. This is not only a grab by one party to dominate every branch of American Government. It is a choke hold on the voices of millions of American voters. Where is our honor? Where is our honesty? Where is our respect for the American people who place their trust in all of us, not one political party?

Mr. Speaker, I thought the principles of American democracy stood for something. I hope the Senate Republican leadership will not fall for this miscarriage of justice.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on the motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record votes on postponed questions will be taken later in the day.

CORRECTING THE ENROLLMENT
OF H.R. 1268

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate Concurrent Resolution (S. Con. Res. 31) to correct the enrollment of H.R. 1268.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. CON. RES. 31

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That in the enrollment of H.R. 1268, an Act making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, and for other purposes, the Clerk of the House of Representatives is hereby authorized and directed to correct section 502 of title V of division B so that clause (ii) of section 106(d)(2)(B) of the American Competitiveness in the Twenty-first Century Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-313; 8 U.S.C. 1153 note), as amended by such section 502, reads as follows:

“(ii) MAXIMUM.—The total number of visas made available under paragraph (1) from unused visas from the fiscal years 2001 through 2004 may not exceed 50,000.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS).

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution instructs the enrolling clerk to correct a provision in division B of the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations conference report that was drafted incorrectly.

The conference agreement included a provision to make available an additional pool of permanent resident visas only for nurses and physical therapists.

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

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 7 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, ordinarily, on a piece of legislation like this, there would be virtually no debate and it would be passed routinely, but I think, for the good of the House, we ought to review exactly what we are doing here and why we are here doing it.

As you know, last month, the supplemental appropriations for Iraq and other purposes was passed by the House and then passed by the Senate. On the Senate floor, the Senate saw fit to adopt an amendment, the purpose of which was to increase the number of visas for nurses by 50,000. That is what it supposedly did.

Now, after that was adopted on the Senate floor, the bill was conferenced. It passed this House some time ago, and the conference passed the Senate yesterday.

Today, we are here with this concurrent resolution, and what does this concurrent resolution do? It raises the number of visas for nursing by 50,000. Why do we have to chew the same cud twice? Why are we here doing today

what we thought had been done much earlier?

I think it is very simple. We are here because the normal processes, the normal democratic processes of the House and the Senate have not been followed. We are here because, in an attempt to solve a debate within the Republican Caucus, extraneous material was added to the Iraqi supplemental which had no business being on that bill in the first place.

What essentially happened is that after this amendment was adopted by the other body, the leadership of the majority party then essentially took away from the Committee on Appropriations the ability to deal with all of these immigration-related issues.

Now, who dealt with them? I am, frankly, not sure, but I think it was Senator FRIST's staff, and I think it was the leadership staff in this House. But we are not sure because it all happened behind some closed door. I am not sure what room it was in. But it happened somewhere, some place in River City.

So now, we are here correcting that mistake. Why am I making a Federal case out of something like this? Well, it is very simple. The history of Congress has been written for decades, and each decade some scholar has noted that Congress works principally in committee. Woodrow Wilson wrote his great piece on the organization of Congress, making the point that Congress really ran in committees. We are here today because that committee system has been corrupted.

What has happened is that we have ignored the fact that the reason for the committee system in the first place has been so that the House could use the specialized knowledge that people develop on each and every committee and put that knowledge to work in the consideration of every bill that goes through this House. Under normal processes, the Committee on Appropriations would have been dealing with all matters that were attached in the appropriations bill.

Under normal processes, Senator HUTCHISON should have been allowed to have access to the language before it was arbitrarily attached to this bill. But when people tried to find out what was happening on immigration and other issues, they were told it is being taken care of. It is being taken care of.

Well, it certainly was.

Mr. Speaker, I simply take this time to make the point that there is a purpose for creating committees. There is a purpose for vetting these issues through the committee of jurisdiction because, through the years, committees learn their business. But when the normal business is side-tracked, when everyone except the powers on high are excluded from the rooms where decisions are being made, then you are going to have mistakes being made because nobody is smart enough to know everything about everything, despite what some people in the leadership in

both the Senate and House seem to feel. Occasionally, the omnipotent can make a mistake. And if the committee process is followed, our chances of making those mistakes would be minimized.

So all I want to say, Mr. Speaker, is that I am sure mistakes like this will occur in the future. And this is no great Earth-shaking matter, but I felt it appropriate to use this opportunity to point out that the House is continuing to day-by-day, as far as I am concerned, corrupt the processes of the House by having the House evolve into a system in which a few staff people somewhere on Capitol Hill make all of the decisions, and then the other committees are told, Just do what you are told. Get rid of it. Move it on. After all, we have got to run the trains on time. It does not matter what is in them, but we have got to run the trains on time.

So that is why we are here today, Mr. Speaker. I hope we could all take a lesson from this.

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HOSTETTLER).

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

Mr. HOSTETTLER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in opposition to S. Con. Res. 31. In the attempt to correct an error in drafting, this concurrent resolution would allow for 50,000 new green cards reserved for nurses and physical therapists. Green card status is permanent resident status. Accompanying spouses and minors also will be given permanent resident status and will not be counted against the 50,000 cap.

If this concurrent resolution is passed, it will give 50,000 nursing and physical therapist jobs away to foreign workers and will be giving even more jobs away to accompanying spouses, as those with permanent resident status are granted work permits.

The argument that the current drafting of the supplemental "recaptures unused employment-based visas" from the past 2 years is false, since any employment-based visas that are not used are given up to meet the family-based visa quota for that year.

A recent study by the Center for Immigration Studies found that "there is little evidence that immigrants take only jobs Americans don't want."

Another recent study conducted by the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University says that "there is little empirical support for the notion that new immigrants are taking large numbers of jobs that American workers refuse to accept. There is direct competition between new immigrants and native-born workers for most of these jobs."

At a hearing I held last week as the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security and Claims,

the minority witness, Dr. Holzer, testified that, due to cost containment in certain fields, "10 to 15 percent jobs in the United States potentially on the high end could face competition from engineers and computer programmers and others in India and China and other parts of the world."

If you have any nursing or physical therapy students in your district, consider that those students who will be graduating this spring will have to compete with 50,000 foreign nurses and physical therapists who will likely work for lower wages. We will have to answer to our constituent nurses and physical therapists who cannot find a job due to the influx of foreign workers in this field.

Also, if we pass this concurrent resolution for nurses and physical therapists, who will be the next workers that we will displace? Will we add 50,000 more new visas to each supplemental, driving more and more domestic American-born workers out of a job?

Today, I ask my colleagues to support their constituents, American workers who are in the fields of nursing and physical therapy, and vote against this concurrent resolution.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, we now find ourselves in an even more interesting situation. The gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HOSTETTLER) has just raised some substantive concerns about the bill, and those ought to be responded to.

The problem is that, because of the way this has been handled, because you had a matter that was not under the jurisdiction of the Committee on Appropriations essentially dumped into an appropriations bill, this issue is not going to be dealt with on the substantive level.

The issues raised by the gentleman might be very legitimate, but they should be debated in the forum in which they are supposed to be debated, and that is the Committee on the Judiciary. Instead, we have the Committee on Appropriations which is supposed to focus on budgets here dealing with a legal issue about which our committee has no particular expertise. So, once again, the process by which the bill is being considered today changes the House from being what it is supposed to be, which is the greatest deliberative body in the world, to a poor imitation of Daffy Duck.

I again would urge that we give greater consideration to normal order around here if we do not want to rapidly descend into being the laughing-stock of the country.

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

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, since this change is merely a technical item in nature, I urge swift adoption of this resolution so we can expedite enrollment of the

bill and get it to the President for his signature today.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. LEWIS) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate Concurrent Resolution, S. Con. Res. 31.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1279, GANG DETERRENCE AND COMMUNITY PROTECTION ACT OF 2005

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 268 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 268

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1279) to amend title 18, United States Code, to reduce violent gang crime and protect law-abiding citizens and communities from violent criminals, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. Notwithstanding clause 11 of rule XVIII, no amendment to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous question shall be