

if Love Field had remained an unrestricted airport. The best proof of that statement is evidenced by the 21 empty gates currently vacant at DFW. Despite any attractive incentives, DFW has been unable to attract new, low-cost tenants because of the discussion of repealing the Wright amendment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE 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 Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana 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 California (Mr. FILNER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FILNER 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 Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

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

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, once again it is an honor to address this great House of Representatives. I want to thank not only the Democratic leader but the Democratic leadership for allowing me to be here on their behalf.

Our 30-something Working Group, which the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) put together in the 108th Congress, our focus is to work on issues that are facing not only young Americans but Americans in general. I think it is very, very important for us to state not only here on the floor but to also say in our communities and the workplace that there is no greater service than making sure that your children and grandchildren have a better opportunity than what you have had. That is kind of the unwritten statement for the 30-something Working Group. We are benefactors of the generation that allowed us to have better opportunities than what they have had. I think that is what makes our

country great. I commend those Members that live with that philosophy.

But I think it is important in a time of judgment and a time that we all have to be leaders that we stand up, not only stand up, but inform the American people and future generations on what is going to happen good for them and in many cases what may not work out the way that is being portrayed here in the Congress or any issue that we are talking about here, that we are taking action on here in Washington, D.C.

There are a lot of good things that families are doing for one another to make sure that future generations and their bloodline have a better opportunity than what they have had. There are families that are trying to save money with a college plan or savings plan for their children to receive education for their bloodline for the first time. Some families that only made it after a 4-year experience stopped at an associate's degree or a bachelor's of science degree, and want their children or a family member to be able to receive a master's degree or a doctor's degree.

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It is that individual in the middle of America that wants his or her son or daughter to be able to carry the family business further than they were ever capable to carry it. I know that it is in the fiber of our American Dream that is in our hearts and in our minds.

So when we start talking about the issue of Social Security, we have to say that that is a paramount issue when we talk about values and commitment to our future generations, we talk about value and commitment to those beneficiaries that are receiving Social Security benefits right now. We have to think about those individuals that are disabled that are counting on this Congress to stand up on their behalf, those individuals that elect us to speak on their behalf.

One thing about this body within the U.S. Congress, we cannot be appointed to the House. We cannot be appointed to this position. We have to be elected. The other body can be appointed. We have to be elected. Through the election process, there is a lot of commitment and sacrifice. A lot of Americans, someone woke up early one morning, 7 a.m., and showed up to their election polling place for some accountability. That is what we are here to do.

When we start talking about Social Security, I think it is important that we come to this floor to let the American people know and the Members of this House of Representatives know that many of us within the Congress are very, very concerned about the privatization scheme that is being talked about and that is being portrayed as a plan for future generations, or the preservation of Social Security.

We cannot believe everything we hear, especially when folks start saying, well, these are the facts and this is

my plan and this is the way it is going to work. Right now, especially on the Democratic side, and I will say a few of my Republican colleagues understand that 48 million Americans are receiving Social Security right now, that 33 million of those Americans are already retired, 33 million that are counting on Social Security. Social Security is that security blanket, our end of the deal that we said we would hold, they paid into it, it is there for them and it will be there for them for the next 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 years at the same level that it is right now.

Of course we want to strengthen Social Security. Also, it is important to understand that right now, today, \$955 per month on average goes out every month to support families and support their unmet needs. This is not a giveaway. This is what they paid for. This is what they invested in. It is important that we do not gamble with those dollars. I think it is also important to understand that 48 percent of Social Security beneficiaries, if they did not have Social Security, they would be living in poverty today.

So, Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but have trouble with the administration's plan and some Members on the Republican side's plan to privatize Social Security and to say and admit up front that benefits will be cut and that they would not only receive a benefit cut but even those who do not want to go in a private account will suffer.

I cannot understand for the life of me how we can serve that up on a platter and say that we are trying to help future generations or present enrollees in Social Security right now. I cannot help but question \$5 trillion. Until I got to the Congress, I had no meaning of what \$5 trillion actually meant, \$5 trillion, not of money that we have in our wallets but money that we are willing to borrow, \$5 trillion. But better yet, this is supposed to help maintain Social Security.

I am going to talk a little further about what we are doing as Democrats, but I would like to yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding. I actually want to commend him because I see him week after week on the floor leading the group under-30 as they demonstrate that you do not have to be a senior citizen, that you do not have to be old and elderly, you do not have to have been here 25 years to have impact on this body. And so I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding, but I also commend him for his leadership and for his position as he talks about Social Security, one of the great programs that has bolstered the quality of life for people in our country.

I actually grew up in a rural community in Arkansas before moving to Chicago, and we had a saying there, that if it ain't broke, don't fix it. They would oftentimes be talking about farm machinery and other kinds of things.