they can better achieve retirement security, and the Social Security Information Act, to ensure that hard-working Americans receive adequate information on which they can begin to plan for their retirement, such as the rate of return on their Social Security investment. As I have mentioned, I think if people today would get information on what the return was going to be on their investment, it would play a big part in their decision to have that or turn to a private retirement account.

I have introduced the Medicare Ensuring Prescription Drugs Act—that is legislation to ensure seniors do not have to choose between their medicines and their food—and the Tax Relief for Seniors Act, legislation to repeal taxes on our seniors' Social Security incomes. That is unfair, again—that tax on our seniors.

These are all components of the Grams Plan for Retirement Security, legislation aimed at helping hard-working Americans receive retirement security. As I close, and as we enter this new session of the 106th Congress, we need to have an honest discussion, not about how best to extend the life of a Government program or how to alter numbers so we might technically fit within spending limits at the expense of our Nation's retirees; instead, we should debate and discuss how to offer hard-working Americans the retirement security they deserve.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative assistant proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

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ELIAN GONZALEZ

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, as a grandmother, and as a member of the Senate Immigration Subcommittee, I want to say a few words about the case of Elian Gonzalez, and particularly to indicate my strong support for the concurrent resolution Congressman RANGEL has introduced in the House. Senator DODD has just submitted a similar resolution in the Senate this afternoon, of which I am a cosponsor.

As you know, this resolution expresses the sense of the Senate that Elian Gonzalez should be reunited with his father, Juan Gonzalez of Cuba. I have been in California, but nonetheless I have been following, as closely as anyone could over the television, the events surrounding this youngster—the very tragic events.

Based on my understanding of the situation, Elian has enjoyed a very close and loving relationship with his father and his grandparents in Cuba. As a grandmother, this has a lot of meaning to me. Those who know Juan Gonzalez have described him as an ''ideal father'' who spent as much time as he could with his son.

Elian has been living in his father's home, where his grandparents also play a role in raising him. Although Elian's mother and father shared joint custody of the child, he actually spent 5 out of every 7 days of the week in his father's home. It is my understanding that his father can support him, that he can provide a good home for him, and, above all, he is a good and loving father. Both he and Elian's mother had joint custody of the youngster.

To the best of my knowledge, there is no evidence that Juan Gonzalez was either neglectful or abusive in his relationship with his son. After all, a strong parental bond should be the overwhelming test for reunification—that and the fact that the touchstone of U.S. immigration policy has been to protect and reunite the family.

Elian's maternal grandparents also took part in raising their grandchild, often keeping him when either parent was working. Despite the divorce of Elian's mother and father, both parents and their respective families maintained, warm relations and continued to play an active role in the youngster's life.

We cannot know of the mother's true motivations or intentions when she and Elian left Cuba. Elian's father has maintained, however, that Elian's mother, Elizabet Broton, took their son without his knowledge or consent.

Elian's fate should not be subject, I believe, to the politics of any one party or political ideology. I urge all of us—in Florida, in Cuba, and in the Halls of Congress—to cool the rhetoric, to set aside any political views, and commit ourselves to seeing this process to a rightful conclusion.

The central issue in this case should not be America's policy toward Cuba but, rather, the sanctity of the family bond between a parent and his child. Without evidence of abuse or neglect on the father's part, no government has the authority to disrupt that bond, no matter if the bond is in the United States or Cuba, or any other place. The father is the father and should have lawful custody.

In addition to my concerns about the negative impact of legislation to grant citizenship to Elian on him and his family, and what that does to the pending court case, I also have deep concerns about the impact this would have on our own immigration policy. It would certainly, at the very least, reflect an uneven application of immigration policy by the United States. It would be, I believe, a case of major political first impression and set a precedent all across this land in virtually every case from anywhere. It could also create a precarious situation for an American child abroad.

The INS continues, to this day, to send back children to their home countries, even those with repressive regimes. Several months ago, two Haitian children were sent back to Haiti while their mother remained in the United States to file for asylum. Here you have a mother in the United States filing for asylum, and during that period the children were sent back to Haiti. It is true that, after protests and several weeks of separation from their mother, Federal authorities did permit the children to reenter the United States. Or you can look at the case of a 15-year-old Chinese girl who today is being held in juvenile detention and has been held in juvenile detention for 7 months. At her asylum hearing, the young girl could not wipe away her tears because her hands were chained to her waist. According to her lawyer, her only crime was that her parents had put her on a boat so she could get a better life over here. She remains in detention to this day.

I think that is a terrible wrong. Here is a youngster who was put on a boat by her parents, who is now in a jail on the west coast of the United States and goes to a hearing chained like a common criminal. In cases such as these, I believe we should review and perhaps even change immigration laws as they relate to minors in certain situations.

I am in the process of writing a letter to the chairman of my subcommittee, the Senator from Michigan, asking that he hold hearings on some of these cases as well as on whether immigration law with respect to children should, in fact, be changed in certain circumstances.

I believe our immigration policy must be consistent and fair. In any given year, the INS handles more than 4,000 unaccompanied minors, and the vast majority are sent back to their families. Others are detained.

I have received scores of phone calls from citizens in California who say, if this child were Salvadoran, if he were a Mexican child, if he were a child from China, the child would be sent back to his country. Why is this child different? Because political organizations in a couple of States want to make a point with this child's situation?

I think the point is, granting American citizenship in this manner will affect every other situation. We might as well know what we are doing when we do this. I think the only way to look at it is to take a look at all of our immigration laws, as they affect children, in an orderly way over a period of time. But in the meantime, current law should be followed with respect to this youngster.

I think granting U.S. citizenship in this manner, which is really without any precedent, would be a very far-reaching action. It would also play out negatively for U.S. children who might be taken to foreign countries without the consent of the U.S. citizen parent. I have actually tried to help in a case involving a child in Saudi Arabia and

found it most difficult. Once we begin to violate that law, what does it say for other American children who might find themselves in a similar circumstance in a foreign country? As a grandmother, I must say, I shudder to think how I would feel in this same situation.

In conclusion, I don't believe our role as a national legislature is to interpose ourselves in a decision that should rightfully be made by a father.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 8:30 P.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 27, 2000.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 5:34 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, January 27, 2000, at 8:30 p.m.