would be 36.6 percent higher if women were paid as much as men.

However, inequalities within the Social Security system are not only to blame for women receiving less benefits than men. The wage gap continues to hinder equality among recipients based on gender. Although the Equal Pay Act became public in 1963, making it illegal to pay women lower rates for the same job strictly on the basis of sex, almost 4 decades later the wage gap among women and men persists and this has a direct impact on Social Security. At the end of 2001, women's average monthly retirement benefit was, on average, $229 less than men's. Our retirement system is employment based, and women are unfairly penalized as they reach retirement age.

However, Social Security was designed to be a guaranteed source of income for retired persons. Although both genders can sometimes find their benefits exhausted, women are particularly at risk. In my State of Indiana, not only is Social Security a necessity among women. It is crucial to many retirees, families, and disabled workers. In Indiana, benefits were paid to close to 1 million persons during the month of December, 2000. This number included over 600,000 retired workers, over 100,000 widows and widowers, over 100,000 disabled workers, almost 60,000 wives and husbands, and over 80,000 children. Social Security beneficiaries represent 16 percent of the total population of the State of Indiana, 95 percent of Indiana's population age 65 and older.

Social Security is the heart of our Nation's insurance. When it was inspired and inaugurated under President Roosevelt in 1935, it was an excellent idea. It was a good idea then; it is a good idea now. It is both our fiscal and moral responsibility to provide our Nation's seniors, especially women, with the benefits that they so rightfully deserve. We cannot abandon our senior citizens and future generations. It would be a grave injustice to deprive them of Social Security benefits. Today's beneficiaries have worked long and hard, paid their taxes, earned their right to a happy and long retirement. It is the responsibility of Congress to make sure that this promise is kept.

In Indiana, over 700,000 people receive Social Security benefits. Of that 700,000, Mr. Speaker, 60 percent of those beneficiaries are women, many of whom live in borderline poverty. We must not privatize Social Security. We must secure Social Security, Mr. Speaker.

□ 1945

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KIRK). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXPANDING THE TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOOLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, there is little arguing about the macroeconomic benefits of free and open trade. International trade agreements lower prices, they encourage higher productivity; and ultimately, they improve consumer choice. But these gains, no matter how significant to our economy, are net gains, because increases in imports usually contribute to a plant closing and worker layoffs. That is because the gains from international trade tend to be very large and are widely distributed throughout our economy. The U.S. economy's ability to create jobs is virtually unmatched by any other Nation.

Unfortunately, that is a simplistic view. The cost of imports are heavily concentrated by industry, location, and worker demographics. And while our economy has demonstrated an ability to create jobs, job creation does not always take place at the same location where jobs are lost. One need look no further than our last census for proof.

New jobs are in different industries than jobs lost. The vast majority of trade-related job losses are in the manufacturing sector. Between 1979 and 1999, 17 million American workers lost their jobs from manufacturing industries. However, during that same period of time, the United States added 39 million jobs. So essentially, for every job lost in the manufacturing sector, more than two jobs were created in the economy.

Almost all the net new jobs created have been in the service sector, which require new skills and, in many cases, do not provide the same wages or benefits which existed at a previous job.

So, yes, the fact remains that the macroeconomic gains from international trade almost always outweigh the cost. However, these costs are significant for individual workers and their families and to the towns and communities in which they live.

As we have seen in the past several years, the costs can undermine efforts to further liberalize trade, which is the position we find ourselves in tonight. Ours is a Nation built on commerce, and I support giving the executive branch the authority to negotiate with foreign nations to lower trade barriers.

We do not need 535 trade ambassadors. What we do need is a mechanism which allows the executive branch to negotiate on behalf of Congress and to ensure the will of Congress is respected in those negotiations.

So far, the legislation granting the President fast track trade negotiating authority has not lived up to this requirement; and as such, I have not supported it. One of the reasons the administration has not been able to rally support for fast track is because of the lousy job we have done in remedying the casualties of trade.

Now, by the way, this has gone on for a long time, for 40 years. Forty years ago, President Kennedy spoke of the need to ensure American workers who lose their jobs to imports are retrained for other careers. Quoting President Kennedy, he said: ''Those injured by trade competition should not be required to bear the full brunt of the impact. Rather, the burden of economic adjustment should be borne in part by the Federal Government. There is an obligation to render assistance to those who suffer as a result of national trade policy.''

Those remarks culminated in the enactment of the Trade Adjustment Assistance program, or TAA, in 1962. At the time, the United States had an enormous trade surplus, imports only comprised 5 percent of the gross domestic product and manufacturing comprised 30 percent of total employment.

Fast forward to today, 40 years later. The share of imports of GDP has tripled, trade surplus has turned into a huge trade deficit and the manufacturing share of total employment has fallen to 13 percent. Despite our strong economic growth, it appears President Kennedy's comment is more relevant today than it was 40 years ago.

While TAA may not erase all the economic pain caused by dislocation, it has made the adjustment to a new job a little easier, and represents small compensation for the losses they and their families have experienced. However, there is a lot of room for improvement in the TAA program. We need to expand the program and ensure that it will offer financial support, retraining and relocation benefits as Americans work to upgrade their skills and transition into more complex jobs that offer them the best opportunity of reclaiming old earning levels.

The other body has made substantial inroads into improving the program in its consideration of fast track legislation, especially in the area that concerns most of us, and that is affordable health care.

Mr. Speaker, as millions of Americans have discovered, losing a good-paying job is bad enough; but losing health insurance is a straw that can break the camel's back. Health insurance is very expensive, which is why nearly one in seven Americans, or 39 million people, do not have health insurance. Currently, workers who lose their jobs are eligible for extended health care insurance which enables them to retain the health insurance they had at their jobs, but at four to six times the amount they formerly paid while employed.

The other body's proposal would remedy that situation by ensuring that TAA eligible workers would have a tax credit of 70 percent of their health insurance premiums. Workers would actually be able to afford health insurance as they seek retraining assistance, a key to ensuring that they finish their retraining. The other body's TAA tax credit provision guarantees

that workers will have access to the coverage they need at a price they can afford. Forty years after the creation of the TAA program, it is high time Congress gave it the resources it needs to be better prepared to better prepare the American workforce for the challenges and opportunities of a global economy. I hope we can all approve of an expanded TAA program that includes health care.

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

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

NOT ALL LAWMAKERS BACK PLAN ON IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as many in this Nation and many around the world, I do not like Saddam Hussein. I do not like him for what he does to the children of his nation, the women of his nation, and the people who are in need in his nation. I do not like what he does with the humanitarian aid, holding it hostage, so those who need medicine and health care, nutrition, those who go hungry, are not served well by his leadership. There is no doubt that he has the capacity and has been engaged in manufacturing weapons of terror and also the kind of chemical warfare that all the world abhors. He is not the kind of leader that any of us would advocate for.

But I raise my voice out of concern for the recent announcements over the past weekend, now finding out that these are somewhat old in their pronouncements, that there are those who previously in months past were aware of the thinking of the administration dealing with covert action in Iraq. In fact, there are articles in our newspapers across the Nation suggesting lawmakers back action against Iraq.

Let me step aside, Mr. Speaker, and stand outside of that circle and speak for what I believe to be many of those in the United States who will ask the question, are we prepared, and what is the basis of that action? I have already stated that the leader of this nation, the leader of the Iraq nation, that is, is not a person who advocates the values that we believe in. I have already indicated that I believe that the country needs a change in leadership.

But in respect to the approach, the question has to be, What is the involvement in oversight of the United States Congress? What are the decisions that will be made with respect to these actions?

We well know that, tragically, Saddam Hussein tried to assassinate one of our Presidents, and we cannot tolerate that; and I would not stand for that kind of action or advocate it or allow it to go unpunished. But we also know that there is no indication that he had anything to do with the horrible act of September 11. We also know that his activities can be classified as bumbling.

We also realize that if we are to engage in a covert action that may include the killing of this leader out of self-defense, that we may also put this Nation's military personnel in the position of a ground war. It has been suggested that 200,000 men and women would be needed for a ground war in Iraq. We realize that Korea was not successful to the point we wanted. The DMZ still exists between North and South Korea, and there is the tragedy of terrible hunger and devastation going on in North Korea. Though we pay tribute to the men who fought in the Korean War, and we thank them, we still have North and South Korea.

We also realize that though we pay tribute to the thousands of young men who lost their lives and those who served in the Vietnam War, we know that Vietnam was not successful to the point we wanted.

We also recognize that out of the turmoil of the Cold War, that the Berlin Wall did fall, and it fell because those in Berlin desired it to fall and the people brought it down.

I believe we need more oversight and insight into decisions to be made regarding Iraq. I oppose these pronouncements suggesting that the next step is for this Nation to enter into a war. We realize that four prior covert actions involving everything from radio propaganda to paramilitary plots have failed to dislodge the Iraqi leader, just as smart bombs, Cruise Missiles and stiff economic sanctions have failed as well. I believe we need more deliberation.

But, most importantly, I am aghast, if you will, at the fact that we are making these pronouncements with what I believe to be little thought. What is the plan? If we have a plan, bring it to the United States Congress. Yes, I understand there is need for the protection of our intelligence sources, and as well that there are decisions that the Commander in Chief has to make. But I am extremely opposed to these kind of war mongering efforts without any facts and without any substance.

It is important to realize that the lives of Americans are on the line. Yes, I am standing toe-to-toe and head-to-head and shoulder-to-shoulder on fighting terrorism in America. I supported the resolution that gave the President the authority to fight terrorism in Afghanistan. I am pleased that Chairman Karzai has recently taken over the leadership of Afghanistan so we will have a head of state to help us fight that war.

But it is extremely important, Mr. Speaker, as I close, in light of the tragedy of September 11, in light of the questions about sharing intelligence between the FBI and the CIA, to know whether we are making the right decision of this covert action, whether or not we are putting our young men and women in jeopardy, in harm's way, without any facts and any study and any plan.

No, lawmakers in totality are not for this plan, and we need to question it and stand up and be counted and not be afraid of being called unpatriotic, because I believe that that is what democracy is all about, is to ask the questions and get the solutions.

Mr. Speaker, amid a growing debate over whether to expand the post-September 11 "war on terrorism" to Iraq and amid fears that Iraq could provide weapons of mass destruction expertise to terrorist groups, President Bush has threatened unspecified action against Iraq to prevent its re-emergence as a threat. The House passed H.J. Res. 75 by a vote of 392–12, which said that Iraq's refusal to readmit U.N. inspectors is a material breach of its international obligations and a mounting threat to peace and security. The resolution did not explicity authorize U.S. military action.

Amid U.S. threats, Iraq held a meeting with U.N. Secretary General Annan on the restart of inspections. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld suggested that the United States would accept new inspections only if such inspections were unconditional and comprehensive, a standard that some Administration officials believe Iraq will never meet.

Several Western and most Arab governments are opposed to a U.S. military campaign against Iraq, a message reinforced by Arab leaders to Vice President CHENEY on his trip to the Middle East in March. Arab leaders have voiced opposition to an attack on Iraq at the Arab League summit, during which Iraq and Kuwait took some steps to reconcile.

Top U.S. military leaders see major risks and difficulties in a large U.S. ground offensive, which could require up to 250,000 U.S. troops, intended to overthrow Saddam and install a new government. President Bush said that he has not decided on whether to authorize a U.S. military offensive against Iraq.

The CIA proliferation assessment for Congress repeats U.S. suspicions of Iraqi rebuilding of and research on weapons of mass destruction but presents little hard evidence of such activity. Britain considered releasing in April 2002 a dossier of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction rebuilding but decided not to. The British concluded that its evidence was not sufficiently convincing. There are also allegations of illicit Iraqi imports of conventional military equipment. Iraq has been illicitly obtaining spare parts for fighter jets and helicopters from Belarus, Ukraine, and the former Yugoslavia. Additional reports discuss weapons buys from Ukraine.

As international concerns for the plight of the Iraqi people has grown, the United States has found it increasingly difficult to maintain support for international sanctions. The "oil-for-food" program has been progressively modified to improve the living standards of Iraqis. The United States has eased its own sanctions to align them with the program.

Iraq does not deserve international respect; that I agree with. However, unilateral foreign policy decisions affirmed by some leaders of Congress are not good either. We need full congressional oversight and review, including more voices to be heard, on whether covert