

Pension reform is financial security for thousands of airline employees. Retiring with a pension of only a fraction of what you expected is not truly a retirement. A lifetime of work should not be rewarded with wondering how you will make ends meet.

Mr. Speaker, the case has been made. Pension reform is needed now. The employees with whom I spoke today have put forth much effort to make a difference. They realize the crisis their pension plans are in, the American public realizes the crisis that pension plans are in, and it is time we fixed the problem before it is too late and before the burden is put on the backs of the American taxpayers. Without objection.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

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

There was no objection.

A CELEBRATION OF INA MAE SELFRIDGE'S LIFE

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

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, this evening I rise to recognize and celebrate the life of a constituent and friend, Ina Mae Selfridge. Ina passed away suddenly on Sunday, July 17, at the age of 76. Her death is a tremendous loss to her family, her community, and the many individuals who were fortunate enough to call her a friend.

Probably the greatest compliment I could give Ina is that she was a great farm girl. In truth, she embodied much of what is good and decent about the family farm and the way of life we enjoy in Kansas. Ina is one of those people you meet and you think to yourself, I am in the presence of an extraordinary human being.

I have known Ina through her many years of service to the organization Women Involved in Farm Economics, otherwise known as WIFE. Most re-

cently, Ina was the national president of WIFE and has served in this position for the past 2 years. Ina was also the State president and member of the Gold Waves Chapter 76 of WIFE located in central and southwest Kansas.

It would not be fitting to talk about Ina and not bring up the ideals and accomplishments of WIFE. Ina truly cared about agriculture and about rural communities. On her many visits to Washington over the years, Ina joined other WIFE leaders to advocate on behalf of the family farm. From health care to energy policy to emergency drought assistance, Ina knew what was going on in farm country because she lived it each and every day.

In fact, Ina's trips to D.C. were usually scheduled so they would not interfere with harvest. In written testimony she gave in 2003 on credit availability in rural areas, she wrote that she would have preferred to be here in person, but it was wheat harvest and "all hands are on deck for the entire family." Indeed, Ina was an integral part of her family farm, even at age 76.

Ina farmed in true partnership with her husband Elmer Selfridge and several of her sons. Their farm in eastern Hodgeman County included wheat, forages and grains for their 1,000-head feedlot. She is survived by her husband; her four sons, Randy, Tyler, Brad, and Wade; and nine grandchildren.

Ina would want me to use part of this time to talk about agriculture. Today I wear a domino on my lapel that she gave to me. It represents WIFE's theme that agriculture has a domino effect on America. Like dominos standing next to each other, when the farmer suffers economic loss, so do local businesses, schools, communities, churches, and local government. Today, however, I wear the domino to show how Ina's life had a positive domino effect on the many lives of everyone who came in contact with her.

Ina had an enthusiasm that few possess. You could not be around Ina and not feel a sense of excitement about what the future might hold. The pioneer spirit of optimism and hard work that established farms across Kansas was alive and strong in Ina. Insights into the life she lived can be derived from her e-mail address, which is simply "happy." This is not to say there were not hardships on the farm. Many parts of Kansas are just now recovering from 5 years of drought, but Ina's can-do personality is an inspiration to us all.

The last time she was in my office she said, "I may not be the WIFE president next year, but I will be back again to remind you about the importance of agriculture." Today I bet she would say, "Time to get back to work. The wheat harvest is in, but we must get ready for the fall crops."

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Ina's family in this time of difficulty with the knowledge that their loss on Earth is God's gain in heaven. It is my absolute privilege to have known Ina.

The world is a better place because of her, and she will be greatly missed.

GUN LIABILITY LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, first I would like to congratulate a colleague of ours, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY), who is actually having her 100th 5-minute Special Order, and we are very proud of her, the country is very proud of her, on bringing issues that certainly affect her constituency and all of ours. So I congratulate her.

The leadership of Congress is constantly preaching about responsibility. Individuals should accept the consequences of their actions. Unfortunately, this culture of responsibility does not extend to the gun industry and negligent gun sellers.

The other body is planning on taking on legislation to grant the gun industry unprecedented immunity from litigation and other legal action. Under this legislation, dealers and manufacturers of guns would receive immunity from any legal action. The gun industry would be unlike the sellers and makers of nearly every other consumer product. These industries must face the consequences of their negligence and misjudgment. In fact, manufacturers and sellers of toy guns are more liable for their products than the makers and sellers of assault weapons and handguns.

The NRA has named this issue as their number one legislative priority this year. They say this bill will end frivolous lawsuits, but not a single, not a single suit against the gun industry has ever been deemed frivolous by a court of law.

This legislation is not about protecting an honest gun dealer who legally sells a gun to someone who later commits a crime. This legislation protects cases of gross negligence which has led to the deaths of unsuspecting victims.

For example, the owner of the Bull's Eye Shooter Supply Store in Washington State was sued because he could not account for 239 guns in his inventory. One of those guns was the Bushmaster used in the D.C. sniper killings. The D.C. sniper killers were allowed to get their hands on a gun because of a gun seller's negligence. But this legislation would get the Bull's Eye Shooter Supply Store off the hook from any legal action.

Fortunately, a lawsuit was already filed against Bull's Eye and Bushmaster. Part of the settlement was Bushmaster agreeing to work with its dealer to promote safe sales practices to prevent continued instances of negligence. But the bill being taken up by the other body would have forced the immediate dismissal of the lawsuit against Bull's Eye.

The gun industry must be subjected to the same laws that govern every other American business, and courthouse doors must remain open to those injured or who have lost loved ones because of the gun industry's negligence. This bill would allow gun dealers to knowingly sell large quantities of guns to a single customer intending to traffic the guns to criminals without any legal repercussions.

Stripping away the threat of legal action would seriously jeopardize any opportunity to make guns safer. Without the threat of lawsuits, the gun industry would have no incentive to incorporate gun locks, safety triggers, and smart gun technology into their products. Imagine if this bill had been passed 40 years ago to cover the auto industry. Today cars would not have seatbelts, airbags, or antilock brakes.

Instead of giving the gun industry never-before-seen levels of protection, I support giving the industry Federal research and development money. This money will be used to develop reasonable safety measures for their products.

Congress has not been responding to the threat that gun violence poses on our safety and homeland security. So I will speak in a language the congressional leadership understands: dollars and cents.

It is unfortunate Congress will not allow the Centers for Disease Control to study the economic impact of gun violence, so we have to use data from independent sources.

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Independent studies have shown gun violence costs our health care system over \$100 billion a year, \$100 billion a year. The \$100 billion-a-year cost includes premiums paid for private health insurance and tax dollars used to pay for Medicaid.

These costs often are not reimbursed and cost the States vital health care money. Victims who survive and suffer years of rehabilitation costs run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. The average cost of each firearm fatality, including medical care, police services, and lost productivity is almost \$1 million per person.

Researchers found taxpayers finance 48 percent of health care costs resulting from gun violence through Medicaid and other government programs, which means the American taxpayers are footing the bill for the destruction gun violence causes.

Mr. Speaker, why are we spending time helping the gun dealers and manufacturers? We should be investigating technology that will make guns safer. Safer, smarter guns prevent lawsuits against the gun industry, but more importantly prevent the tragic, unnecessary loss of life that the gun industry's negligence provokes.

We should be giving them research and development money. We should be doing everything we can to prevent the injuries. People do not understand

when gun violence hits home, it is a whole disaster to the family and to the community. We can do a better job. We should be doing a better job.

But protecting the gun industry, or certainly the gun dealers from not being able to be sued, is wrong. We should not be closing the courts for anyone.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order for 5 minutes.

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

There was no objection.

LACK OF SUPPORT FOR CAFTA

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

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am on the floor again tonight. I have been speaking against CAFTA. I have joined my friends on both the Republican side and the Democratic side who feel that CAFTA is not good for the American workers and not good for the American people and certainly does not help those in Central America.

And tonight I want to take just a few minutes and insert for the RECORD the entirety of a letter from seven members of the general assemblies down in five of the countries that are opposed to CAFTA.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman that I met recently is from El Salvador, and this was at a conference last week that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and I attended, Interfaith Council of Protestants, Catholics, and also one rabbi to speak in opposition to CAFTA.

Let me just give the first introductory statement. It says: "Dear Members of the United States Congress, the CAFTA market has fewer than 9.2 million people who can buy U.S. goods."

Now, this is a long letter. It is signed by seven members of the Central American assemblies, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Honduras.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go to the last paragraph of the letter from those members of the elected bodies of those countries. And this is what it says in the close of their letter, not mine, but their letter: "CAFTA is a bad trade deal because it puts the interests of international corporations ahead of the welfare of the working poor and the poor in Central America. If CAFTA is

approved, the social instability that CAFTA supporters like to use as a reason for approving the agreement will come not from outside forces, but from the pressures created by the millions of displaced workers who will fall further into poverty."

It is time to say "no" to CAFTA and begin negotiating a new trade agreement that takes into account the region's need for development and real opportunity for its citizens. We respectfully ask you for your support of our people and vote "no" on CAFTA.

Mr. Speaker, again this is from seven people from different countries who represent their people in Central America who are opposed to this agreement.

Let me now go, in the few minutes I have left, to a joint statement concerning the United States Central American Free Trade Agreement by the Bishops' Secretariat of Central America and the chairman of the Domestic and International Policy Committees of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

And let me just make a few points that they make in their long letter of opposition. First it says: "In light of the values and principles that we have outlined as well as the situation of the people, we express some of our specific concerns about the potential impact of CAFTA on our countries, especially in Central America."

I am going to just read a few points: "There has not been sufficient information and debate in our countries about the various aspects of CAFTA and its impact on our societies." Another point: in the area of agriculture, there is insufficient attention given to such sensitive issues as the potential impact that U.S. farm supports on Central America farm products. It seems like that poor farming communities in Central America will suffer greatly when subsidized agricultural products from United States expand their reach into these markets.

Another point made by the bishops: while certain labor and environmental provisions are included in the agreement, it is not clear that the enforcement mechanisms within CAFTA will lead to stronger protections of fundamental worker rights and the environment.

Then there is one other point that I want to read, Mr. Speaker. This, again, was from the Catholic Bishops of Central America and the Catholic Bishops of America: the treaty will have effects on intellectual property rights. The proposed legal framework could jeopardize a right of Central American countries to exercise proper stewardship of their natural resources.

Mr. Speaker, I am here tonight because in my State of North Carolina, I was not here when NAFTA passed back in 1992, enacted in 1993, but we have lost over 200,000 jobs in North Carolina. In the country of America, we have lost better than 2.5 million jobs since NAFTA was enacted in 1993.

I did not vote for Trade Promotion Authority. I did not think President