

CONGRATULATING CAITLIN LANTERMAN AND MADISON COLLINS

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

Mr. FULCHER. Mr. Speaker, most Americans watching these proceedings right now are watching them on C-SPAN.

C-SPAN is a public service funded by the cable industry which receives no taxpayer dollars. Every year C-SPAN holds a documentary contest for middle and high school students called StudentCam. This year students addressed the theme: What does it mean to be an American?

Today I am proud to announce that some of my young constituents, Caitlin Lanterman and Madison Collins from Mountain View High School, were chosen as winners. The winning videos can be viewed at studentcam.org.

On behalf of the people of Idaho, congratulations on winning this prize out of nearly 3,000 entries.

#### EXPANDING SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, let me first, before we begin, given the tragedy that, once again, has visited our country over the weekend, pause and acknowledge—with Rabbi Lazowski from Connecticut in Washington, D.C., this evening and his son, Alan Lazowski, joining him at a Holocaust museum dedication, and after listening to the eloquence of SCOTT PETERS and our own JOHN LEWIS—how indeed saddened we are by these events.

As Mr. LEWIS said, we remain focused on ending and focusing on hoping and praying that these horrific events will stop, but I assure you they will not stop without action on behalf of the United States Congress.

Mr. Speaker, we are honored to rise this evening and discuss Social Security 2100. We are honored to be joined by the deputy chair of the committee, BILL PASCRELL from Paterson, New Jersey. We want to make sure that citizens all across this country understand the number of hearings that are going on in districts all across the country and here in the Nation's Capitol, because it is long overdue that we address the issue of not just protecting Social Security, but enhancing it.

Mr. Speaker, in fact, the last time that the United States Congress significantly addressed the issue of Social Security was in 1983. Tip O'Neill was then Speaker of the House, and Ronald Reagan was President. It does demonstrate that Democrats and Republicans can work together in the best in-

terests of the country, and there is no bill currently before the body that does that in a better way than Social Security 2100.

I say that because it is the only bill that has an actuarial report that verifies that it does everything that it says it will do: keep Social Security solvent, sustainably solvent beyond the 75-year requirement by law. But also, not just make it sustainably solvent, but enhance the program so that people all across this country can benefit from the Nation's leading insurance program.

Now, the point we always try to make and get across is something that is intuitively obvious to American citizens, but not often explained graphically, and that is this: that Social Security is not an entitlement. Mr. Speaker, you hear people speak of Social Security and say: we need entitlement reform.

Certainly, you are entitled to Social Security because you paid for it. This is what every American citizen understands from the first time they get a paycheck and they look at its stub, and it says: FICA. FICA stands for Federal Insurance Contribution.

Whose contribution?

Yours.

American citizens throughout their work life contribute into the program. They do so knowing that since 1940 they have been able to get a check in return for either their retirement or because of a disability or spousal or dependent coverage. That is why it is the most effective and unique governmental program paid for by American citizens through their FICA premiums that are taken from their paycheck weekly, biweekly, or monthly.

But what every American knows is that this is the insurance you have paid for, not an entitlement program that the government somehow just grants you.

So we come to Congress in this session, as we have in the past, proposing a bill, but one that we have already had four public hearings on. In those hearings, we have discussed why, in fact, it is necessary for us not to just protect and preserve Social Security, make sure that it is sustainably solvent for 75 years, but, in fact, enhance it, starting with the fact that the last time we strengthened the program was in 1983.

So to say that we are overdue is an understatement. We are overdue at a time when baby boomers are retiring at a record rate. In fact, Mr. Speaker, 10,000 baby boomers a day become eligible for Social Security. That, in and of itself, should require an actuarial adjustment, one that should have been indexed into the law in 1983 but was not.

So now it is incumbent upon the Congress. Citizens can't do this on their own. They make their premium payments every week, biweekly, or monthly, but it is up to Congress to make sure the program is actuarially sound.

So we proposed a bill that is not only actuarially sound beyond 75 years, but also one that is enhanced to make up for the lack of indexing and make sure that people now in their retirement can have a rational increase in their Social Security.

Nobody is getting wealthy on Social Security. Nobody is hoarding their Social Security money. They spend it weekly, biweekly, and monthly in their respective communities. It is an economic boost to every community and essential for the survival of many of our citizens.

We have opted to make sure that we enhance Social Security in the following four ways: number one, there is a modest, 2 percent across-the-board increase for everyone who is receiving Social Security and who will receive Social Security in the future.

Number two, we make sure that the new level of Social Security payments is now changed so that as long as you have paid in your quarters, you have put in your time, and paid your Social Security benefits, the new floor for Social Security will be 125 percent of what the Federal Government determines the poverty rate is at that time, therefore lifting so many people, especially women, and more directly especially women of color, in this country who have been the caregivers of our children and family members whether through birth or through sickness, and therefore have not been in the workforce as long as their male counterparts. We also know that while they were in the workforce, they were making 70 cents for every dollar their male counterpart was. So to raise people out of poverty so they can make their payments to maintain a lifestyle or quality of life that is just above the poverty level is the right thing to do.

The third thing we do is something that the AARP has long advocated, and that is to make sure that we have a COLA that actually reflects the cost that people incur when they are in retirement.

What are those costs?

Those costs happen to be utility bills—heating and cooling your home—the doctor visits, the prescription drugs, the nutrition, and the physical therapy. Those are the essential—along with food—elements that you need to exist. It ought to be factored into how COLAs are given. Currently a COLA is just given based on the consumer price index and an average which incorporates a multitude of expenses, and, frankly, oftentimes, as every senior in America will attest, they have gone without COLA payments at a time when the disparity of wealth is getting greater in this country of ours. So a COLA payment makes sense and is geared towards your actual expenses, something that we call CPI-E, E standing for the elderly and the expenses that they incur.

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Lastly, we also do a fourth thing. We provide a tax break to seniors.