and paying the taxes to support each retiree.

Now here is what the average retired couple has already gotten back: Over four times what they and their employer put into the Social Security taxes, plus compound interest. This chart shows that if you happened to retire in 1940, it took just 2 months to get everything back that you and your employer put into Social Security taxes. If you retired in 1960, it took 2 years.

Look what is going to happen to the workers that are starting to retire today, to the workers that are 35 and 45 and 50 years old. They are going to have to work 26 years after retirement. They are going to have to live 26 years after retirement in order to collect the benefits that they and their employer put into Social Security. We have got to have a change.

I have developed a proposal that I think we should run up the flagpole in order to start coming up with solutions to save Social Security. My proposal allows some private investment, but at the same time does not take away benefits from anybody over 58 years old.

□ 1530

So I think we have to tell people ahead of time what is happening. Part of the solution is a private investment. Part of the solution is slowing down benefits for the higher income recipients.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that we deal with these serious problems as soon as possible and not put it off for another decade.

SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE CAPITAL OF THE UNITED STATES

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

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today first and foremost to thank the leadership of this country for the priority they have placed upon the capital of the United States, to thank President Bill Clinton, majority leader of the Senate TRENT LOTT, and our own Speaker, NEWT GINGRICH, who have agreed that among the five priorities for this session of Congress should be special attention to the capital of the United States. There is there the kind of bipartisanship that one would expect from a great country for its great capital.

Why this priority for the capital of the United States? Well, I suppose its name tells it all. It is the capital of the United States, and there is in this body and this country a fiduciary obligation to its own capital. It is self-evident. The District of Columbia is a financial orphan under our Constitution. It is not a part of any State. It cannot even tax people who come here from other regions, use our services and go home without leaving any, not even one thin dime of tax money here.

Why has the city come to this state of affairs now? Well, all of the cities are in great trouble, but they have States. There is not a big city in the United States that would not be flat on its back if it were not for its State. Cities are increasingly clusters of the poor, with the middle class having fled.

This chart tells the story of the death-dealing crisis of your capital city. We are on line to lose three times as many people in the 1990's as we lost in the 1980's. If we mean to have a capital, now is the time to move in. This is the session of Congress to move in to help the city.

The reason this has not been as apparent as it should be is that the District Government has been historically poorly managed. That hides the poor performance of the Congress and of the country. The poor performance of the city should not give rise to the abandonment of the capital by our country.

And what about the performance of the Congress, which offloaded $5 billion in pension liability built up before home rule? What about a Congress that says to a city in this day and time, hey, you pay for State functions, prisons, Medicaid, courts, all by yourself with no help from anyone else? It cannot be done, my good colleagues. And yet there are no sure and fast answers to the problems of the District.

I went this week to the funeral of a brave young officer, Officer Brian Gibson, executed, and I come back the day of his funeral to find a Member of the other body wanting to put the death penalty on the District of Columbia. This is 4 years after the District faced this issue and voted that it would be among the jurisdictions not to have the death penalty.

The top killing States in the United States all have the death penalty. We do not see the death penalty as the answer to the crime problems of the District of Columbia. We do note that the American Bar Association says that the death penalty is so inequitably applied that there should be a moratorium on it.

We ask the help of our country. We are prepared to make, and are making, excruciating sacrifices that no city which has gotten into trouble has had to make, that New York and that Philadelphia, which all became insolvent years before the District, none had to make, because there was a State.

We are asking for the help of our country. We believe that the half-million people who live in the District deserve the help of our country. But please do not impose on us matters that we ourselves have not approved. This is yet a free country, and this is the Congress that boasts that it is devolving power back to the localities, not usurping power from the localities.

I welcome the help of my colleagues. I look forward to working with the President, with the majority leader of the Senate, with the Speaker of the House, and with my own leadership to make the capital of the Unites States a city that we truly can all be proud of.

THE COMMON SENSE CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM ACT OF 1997

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. KNOLLENBERG] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, the fundraising scandals of the 1996 Presidential election have moved campaign finance reform to the front burner of the agenda for the 105th Congress. Things like the ever-expanding influence of special and large contributions from non-U.S. citizens have eroded the public's confidence in our democratic process and left far too many Americans demoralized and in fact disenfranchised.

At the same time, while the level of attention has increased significantly in just the last few months, most observers agree that the chances of passing a comprehensive overhaul of our campaign finance system in this Congress remain very, very slim. I happen to agree with that assessment.

Currently, we have a Democrat in the White House, we have the Republicans in control of both Houses. Asking us to pass a comprehensive bill now would be like asking two football teams to overhaul the rules of the game while it is being played.

Instead, I believe that we should take a series of incremental steps toward reform and correcting the most glaring and immediate problems of the current system, while leaving the larger issues to a time when the chances of passing a comprehensive bill are more realistic.

I rise today to introduce what I believe should be the first step: the Common Sense Campaign Finance Reform Act of 1997. This bill is designed to remedy the most pressing problems, and I say again, the most pressing problems of our current system, namely, the influx of special interest and foreign money into the Nation's campaign coffers.

First, and this chart I think says it all very well, my bill would require that House and Senate candidates limit their PAC contributions to 35 percent, as represented by this graph.

Second, there is a limit on outside donors. Candidates can raise no more than 35 percent of their individual contributions, I am talking about individual contributions, from donors who live outside their districts for House Members or outside the State for Senators. Then finally, limit foreign money. Candidates may not accept contributions from people who are ineligible to vote. So one, two, three; it is very simple.

This would address the concerns raised by the amount of money that came from non-U.S. citizens during the 1996 election, and it would also, I think, crack down on efforts to circumvent individual contribution limits

by funneling money through the children of rich donors.

Mr. Speaker, I firmly believe that if we try to swallow campaign finance reform whole instead of taking smaller bites, we ultimately choke. Instead, we should adopt what I believe this is, a more realistic and commonsense approach to focus on getting the job done. That is what I think the American people want, and that is what my bill offers. Again, three steps, if the camera can pick this up, one, two, and three, that is all there is to it, but it goes a long way, I believe, toward commonsense reform, reform we can do now. I urge my colleagues to become cosponsors.

THE HONG KONG REVERSION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BEREUTER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, in less than 5 months nearly a century of British rule will end and Hong Kong will become a special administrative region of China. Nobody knows exactly what will happen in Hong Kong on that night or in ensuing months and years. This reversion is unprecedented in its complexity.

Hong Kong, one of the world's most efficient economies, will become part of an emerging giant that has yet to integrate itself fully into the world economy and the international community and which has only begun to experiment with democracy at the village level.

The United Kingdom and the People's Republic of China have largely agreed upon the basic rules for Hong Kong's reversion in the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984. For its part, China has agreed to grant Hong Kong more autonomy than international law requires.

In Hong Kong's Constitution, the basic law of 1989, the National People's Congress unveiled a one-country, two-system arrangement for 50 years. During that time, Hong Kong is supposed to enjoy a high degree of autonomy, except in the areas of foreign affairs and defense.

It is rumored that over 7,000 journalists from around the world will be on hand at midnight on June 30, 1997, to witness the official handover. Presumably those journalists will be there to observe whether the transition goes smoothly. Already the press coverage in Hong Kong has become intense.

In large part, the attention focused on Hong Kong by the international press has been fueled by misguided or heavy-handed efforts by the Chinese Government to disband the current legislative council and replace it with the provisional legislature, to alter civil rights protections in Hong Kong, and to improperly influence the extremely efficient and extraordinarily important civil service of Hong Kong.

Today, with a number of colleagues, I am introducing the Hong Kong Reversion Act that will aid Congress in wading through all of the important issues and this complex transition by building on the Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992. It will require assessments and reports by the Secretary of State in very specific areas so that the President can determine whether to maintain current United States law and policies involving Hong Kong.

In addition, I am especially pleased to report that a team of specialists from the Library of Congress, led by Kerry Dumbaugh, has, at my request, just completed an excellent comprehensive report entitled ''Hong Kong's Reversion to China: Implications for the United States.'' This excellent report will also greatly assist the Congress in this important task, so I am allowing the Library of Congress to make this report publicly available today.

Mr. Speaker, this Member invites the cosponsorship and support of this legislation by any and all of my colleagues. Original cosponsors include the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN], the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. HAMILTON], the gentleman from California [Mr. BERMAN], the gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON], the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BARRETT], the gentleman from California [Mr. DREIER], the gentleman from American Samoa [Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA], the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. CRANE], the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. KOLBE], and the gentleman from California [Mr. COX].

TRIBUTE TO THE PEOPLE OF LITHUANIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. SHIMKUS] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the people of Lithuania, who, through tireless perseverance, are celebrating their independence on Sunday, February 16.

Referred to as the crossroads of Europe, with the geographical center of Europe just to the north of the capital of Vilnius, Lithuania is a fascinating and diverse country rich in history and tradition. I am proud to be a descendent of a Lithuanian immigrant to the United States. My great grandfather, Casper Shimkus, came to this country in hopes of finding the American Dream. It is my pleasure to carry on his name and his Lithuanian heritage, a heritage strong in work ethic, personal responsibility, and the ability to overcome adversity.

As Americans, there are certain rights we take for granted, all of which can be found in our Bill of Rights. Lithuanians have struggled for these rights, a struggle which has expanded the centuries.

Since the founding of the first Lithuanian state in 1236, Lithuania has been occupied by czarist Russia for a majority of the time, an occupation which lasted continuously from 1795 to 1915. During that time, the people of Lithuania were subjected to many hardships, including being unable to use the Latin alphabet, lack of religious freedom, and desecration of their cultural identity.

With the collapse of czarist Russia at the end of World War I, Lithuanians took advantage of the opportunity to regain their independence. On February 16, 1918, the Lithuanian National Council met and declared the restoration of Lithuania's independence. After defending itself against foreign armies traveling across the territory after the war, by the early 1920's Lithuania was a free nation rebuilding its own political culture and economic life.

This freedom was short-lived for the Lithuanian people. On August 23, 1939, the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany entered into a pact which placed Lithuania in the Soviets' sphere of influence. On June 15, 1940, in violation of international law, the Soviet Union invaded Lithuania. The occupation by the Soviet Union lasted for about 1 year until Nazi Germany forced the Soviets out and then occupied this country.

□ 1545

It was during the next 3 years of Nazi occupation that most of Lithuania's 200,000 Jewish citizens were murdered. After the fall of Nazi Germany, the Soviets stepped in and again occupied Lithuania. However, the idea of an independent Lithuania never died. In the late 1980's, as changes were taking place throughout the Soviet Union, Lithuanians organized a powerful independence movement.

After four decades of suppression of their culture and heritage, the Lithuanian people rose up in peaceful protest. The continued protest and push for independence finally culminated in 1990, with proindependence candidates winning a clear majority in elections to the Parliament of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic. On March 11, 1990, the reestablishment of an independent Lithuanian State was proclaimed. After a final, unsuccessful coup attempt by a few Soviet military units in 1991, Lithuania took its rightful place in the international community as a vibrant, independent country.

Now led by a parliamentary democracy, the determined Lithuanian people are beginning to feel the full benefits of freedom, religious freedom, a taste of democracy, and movement toward an effective free market economy. The United States must lend its full support to not only Lithuania, but to all the Baltic States now. This is not the time for our administration to waver on its position toward the Baltics.

With the instability of the political situation in Russia, it is in the long-term interest of the United States to promote democracy and free markets