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