

Unfortunately, when individuals change jobs, they are not able to continue the same level of pension benefits. This fact is especially true if the individual's pension plan is a defined benefit plan. Today, I am introducing legislation which takes steps towards improving pension portability upon employment separation. The legislation improves pension portability for both defined benefit and defined contribution plans.

For defined contribution plans, the legislation reduces the current vesting period of five years for employer contributions to three years. For both defined benefit plans and defined contribution plans, the legislation requires the employer to offer the employee the option of receiving a lump sum distribution to an individual retirement account (IRA). The employer has to make this offer to the employee within 90 days of termination of employment. The employee does not have to take this option because in some situations this would not be the best option for the employee.

The lump sum would be directly transferred to an IRA. These funds would be subject to a higher penalty than the current law penalty of 10 percent for withdrawals made prior to the taxpayer reaching age 59½. Withdrawals would be subject to a 25 percent penalty for the first two years and then it would be 10 percent. These penalties are the same penalties as for simple IRAs. The 10 percent penalty would be waived for the three allowable purposes under current law which are first time purchase of a home, costs of higher education, and medical expenses.

The legislation waives the 10 percent penalty for withdrawals made before age 59½ for individuals who have received 12 weeks of unemployment compensation. This provision is to help those who have lost their job and need to use their retirement savings to make ends meet during difficult financial times.

TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH PICCONE,
UNICO HONOREE OF THE YEAR

HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

Mr. DOYLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to put a face and a name to the spirit that embodies one of the strengths of our country: community involvement. Community involvement that stems from a life of dedication and determination. It is a distinct privilege to extend my congratulations to Joe Piccone, Unico Honoree of the Year.

For many, Joe represents the optimum response to the question "What could be?". A child from Civitella, Joe created success in the United States in part due to the strength provided by his culture and customs, and his actions have served to improve the environment and the lives of others. It is fitting that such an outstanding organization recognize the example Joe Piccone sets for commitment to excellence. Sharing Joe's Italian heritage, I am extremely proud to call the honoree a friend and greatly appreciate having this opportunity to express my sincere respect for him.

Businessman, husband and father, or friend; Joe brings an enthusiasm that underscores the importance of engaging yourself in life

even with regard to the most ordinary, everyday occurrences. Joe's life illustrates the profound effects that result from love and perseverance. Joe, I salute your most recent accomplishment and offer my best wishes to you and your family for continued success.

TAIWAN STANDS TALL
FINANCIALLY AND POLITICALLY

HON. GERALD B.H. SOLOMON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, during the January recess I had an opportunity to visit the Republic of China on Taiwan. I met with President Lee Teng-hui, Foreign Minister Jason Hu, and other leaders. We discussed a number of interesting issues.

One issue was the current financial turmoil affecting Asia. It is interesting to note that Taiwan, so far, has remained relatively unscathed and has stood out as one of the few strong Asian economies. It has close to \$90 billion of foreign currency deposits. Its banking sector is not as exposed as other economies to real estate and stock market speculation. Its currency has depreciated 20 percent against the dollar but will remain stable.

The Taiwan economic miracle has shown resilience and dynamism during the past months of Asian meltdown. The economic growth rate for Taiwan in 1997 reached 6.72 percent, the highest in 5 years. Taiwan's economic vitality can also be seen in its low foreign debts. Its total foreign debt amounts to less than \$100 million.

Taiwan's economic stability stemmed mainly from sound planning for strong growth and development, financial reform, economic liberalization, and the acceleration of privatization.

The Financial Times of London and the Asian Wall Street Journal recently described Taiwan as the "Switzerland of the Orient." Such accolades about Taiwan speak volumes about the strength and vitality of Taiwan's economy and Taiwan's potential to become a full-fledged developed economy by the turn of the century.

President Lee, Foreign Minister Hu and I also discussed Taiwan's relations with the mainland. Taipei has reiterated its "three nos" and "three musts" policies toward the Chinese mainland. The "three nos" refer to no Taiwan independence, no hasty unification and no confrontation. The "three musts" are the maintenance of peace, the continuation of exchanges and the search for a win-win situation that benefits both Taiwan and the mainland.

Foreign Minister Hu told me that Taipei and Peking must learn to treat each other with respect and work toward collective cooperation. Taipei has always kept its door open for negotiating with Peking and that cross-strait talks should be resumed as soon as possible.

Foreign Minister Hu, the former ROC representative in Washington, is young and energetic. During the last three months as his nation's top diplomat, he has traveled to Africa, consolidated friendship and relations for his country worldwide. In my conversations with him, he discussed the importance of Taiwan-US relations.

Minister Hu reminded me that Taipei has no intention of interfering with the development of

US-PRC relations and that Taipei hopes that the US will abide by the Taiwan Relations Act and its regulations regarding arms sales to Taipei. Moreover, he hopes that the US will not change its consistent position on the sovereignty of Taiwan, since the US has never recognized that the PRC enjoys sovereignty over Taiwan.

Minister Hu also drew my attention to the trade relations between Taipei and the US. Citing Taiwan's purchase of American agricultural exports as one example of the strong trade relations between the two countries, he mentioned Taiwan is the fifth largest market for American agricultural exports. In 1996 Taiwan's imports of American agricultural products were US\$2.9 billion; by contrast, the PRC is the seventh largest market for American agricultural exports. Taiwan, in fact, is one of the most important markets for US goods.

Apart from strong trade relations between Taiwan and the US, Minister Hu stressed that the peoples of Taiwan and the United States share the same system of values. Taiwan's democratization has gained recognition from the American public and he hopes that the United States will continue to treat both Taiwan and the Chinese mainland fairly and make efforts for Taiwan and the mainland to settle the reunification issue peacefully.

I was very impressed with Taiwan's financial and political development. And Mr. Speaker, a little history is in order as well. You know, Taiwan is one of the best friends America has ever had. Back during the Cold War, we in America really didn't have a more steadfast ally in our struggle against Communism than the people of Taiwan.

They were integral in stopping the spread of that deadly system in Asia, and for that we owe them a debt of gratitude.

And with the successive free elections over the past few years, the obvious respect for human rights that is evidenced there, and the good neighborly policy they follow in foreign affairs, it is obvious to all honest and well-meaning people that the Republic of China on Taiwan, and not the Communist dictatorship in Beijing, represents the correct model for the future of Chinese civilization. This will remain true no matter what kind of reforms the regime in Beijing attempts, and no matter what kind of policy the West pursues vis-à-vis that regime, as long as the Communists remain in power.

Mr. Speaker, after my trip, I am more convinced than ever that Taiwan is one of the few true democracies in Asia worthy of our support.

TRIBUTE TO EDUARDO PALACIOS

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to my good friend Eduardo Palacios, who for 27 years has been a bona fide hero to hundreds if not thousands of immigrants in the San Fernando Valley. In 1971, Eduardo started an immigrant rights and resource clinic in a tiny one-room office in the City of San Fernando. Today these kinds of centers are common, but that wasn't the case in the early 1970s.

Eduardo was motivated by the humanitarian concerns and a strong sense of Chicano

pride. He witnessed Mexican immigrants who were being exploited by unscrupulous businesses. Language and culture prevented many from seeking or receiving help. By offering his service, Eduardo filled a huge need.

Soon after opening, the clinic moved into a room with a couple of desks and file cabinets in Santa Rosa Church. The clinic adopted the name Immigration Services of Santa Rosa. Using a corps of dedicated volunteers, Eduardo expanded the clinic to include job referrals, medical assistance, food and shelter. He was doing everything possible to provide his clients with the tools to make a good living in this country.

It's hard to believe that Eduardo was doing this work while employed full-time at Harshaw Chemicals. In 1983, he left his job with Harshaw to devote himself to assisting immigrants. Two years later Immigration Services of Santa Rosa was accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals, which led to more clients. The timing could not have been better; new arrivals were now coming to Southern California from Central America as well as Mexico.

Immigration Services of Santa Rosa is a family affair. In 1988, Eduardo hired his daughter, Victoria Aldina, as Assistant Executive Director; three years later his son, Carl Alan, joined the organization as Administrative Director. Together the Palacios have been a godsend for Spanish-speaking immigrants.

I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting Eduardo Palacios, a leader in the effort to improve the lives of immigrants. His compassion, sensitivity and extraordinary energy inspire us all. I am proud to be his friend.

THE SPIRIT OF DR. KING LIVES
ON

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, we celebrated the birth of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Reflecting on his life and work, I was reminded of the challenges that democracy poses to us and the delicacy of liberty. Dr. King's life, and, unfortunately, his vicious murder, should remind all of us that we must continually work and, if necessary, fight, to secure and protect our freedoms. Dr. King, in his courage to act, his willingness to meet challenges, and his ability to achieve, embodied all that is good and true in that battle for liberty.

The spirit of Dr. King lives on in many of the citizens in communities throughout our nation. It lives on in the people whose actions reflect the spirit of resolve and achievement that will help move our country into the 21st century. In particular, several distinguished individuals from Indiana's First Congressional District were recognized during the 19th annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Breakfast on Monday, January 19, 1998, at the Gary Genesis Center in Gary, Indiana. In the past year, these individuals have, in their own ways, acted with courage, met challenges, and used their abilities to reach goals and enhance their communities.

Lake County Prosecutor, the Honorable Bernard Carter, was honored with the 1998

"Marcher's Award" for his contributions to the struggle for equality of civil rights. As the first African-American County Prosecutor in the State of Indiana, Bernie has been an outstanding professional in his fight for the civil rights of all minorities and women. He has been a role model for our young people and an outspoken and issue-oriented leader in the justice system. In addition, Mr. Curtis Strong received the 1998 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "Drum Major Award" for his outstanding contributions to fighting segregation. Curtis has held leadership roles with both the NAACP and the Fair Share Organization, in which he has demonstrated against racial injustices in housing, education, employment, and police brutality. Curtis was also a top labor union official who fought for minority inclusion in union leadership, skilled crafts jobs, and seniority appreciation. Both Bernard Carter and Curtis Strong should be applauded for their important civil rights efforts in Northwest Indiana.

I would also like to recognize the following Tolleston Junior High School students: Janne' Bryant, Antoinette Correa, Tiffany Finch, Brandi Frith, Lakisha Girder, Leyona Greer, Damara Hamlin, Ayonna Hood, Leah Johnson, Jacleen Joiner, Candice Jones, Taariq Muhammad, Ayashia Muhammad, Ilisha Muhammad, Reneda Pryor, Whitney Sullivan, David Suggs, Courtney Williams, and Joey Willis. These distinguished students are members of the Tolleston Junior High School Spell Bowl Team, which won the 1997 Indiana State Bowl Championship in spelling. In addition, the following students from Northwest Indiana won the 1997 "I Have A Dream" Youth Assembly essay contest this past July in Little Rock, Arkansas: Dayna Maria Ingram, of West Side High School; Wesley Adam Gordon, of St. Michael School; Katherine R. Rzepka, of Andean High School; Tavetta Pulliam, of Horace Mann High School; and Daniel J. Davis, of Valparaiso High School.

The accomplishments of these outstanding individuals are a reflection of their hard work and dedication to scholarship. Their scholastic effort and rigorous approach to learning have made them the best in the State and in the Nation. They have also brought pride to themselves, their families, their schools and their communities. Their success is also a credit to the outstanding ability and leadership of their teachers. In particular, Margaret Hymes and Charles Wells should be commended for the devotion they have demonstrated as coaches for the Tolleston Junior High School Spell Bowl Team.

Though very different in nature, the achievement of all these individuals reflects many of the same attributes that Dr. King possessed, as well as the values he espoused. Like Dr. King, these individuals saw challenges and rose to the occasion. They set goals and worked to achieve them. Mr. Speaker, I urge you and my other colleagues to join me in commending their initiative, resolve, and dedication.

CONTRIBUTION BY LIZ MOWRY TO
THE SOLDIERS AND SAILORS
MEMORIAL

HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

Mr. DOYLE. Mr. Speaker, we honor our veterans not only by recognizing what they have

done for this country, but also by remembering what they sacrificed to achieve that goal. For many families in Southwestern Pennsylvania, like mine, who have family members that served during wartime, we are reminded every day about these sacrifices.

Late last year, a resident of my district, Liz Mowry of Munhall, Pennsylvania, gave a very special gift to the Pittsburgh community. Her contribution will not only help to honor our veterans, but it will also help our entire nation understand and remember the supreme sacrifices they made during wartime in order to protect the freedoms we enjoy today.

This gift was many personal possessions owned by her father during his service in World War I, which Ms. Mowry donated to the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial in Pittsburgh, the Commonwealth's, and the nation's second largest veterans' museum. These items are significant for many reasons.

One of the most impressive features is the excellent condition of the items, given their age. In fact, the centerpiece of the collection is a military uniform, now over 80 years old, in museum-quality shape. Other items Ms. Mowry is giving to the Memorial are WWI photos and a copy of the diary her father kept during his service.

These items are also historically significant because of their owner. Sergeant William Edward "Doc" Handschuh, Ms. Mowry's father, was a member of Company 3, the 1st Air Service Mechanical Regiment. His work included servicing planes flown by WWI flying ace Edward Rickenbacher, who some consider to be one of the best, and most famous, pilots in history.

However, the most important thing Sergeant Handschuh left his family was not his service memorabilia, but the pride he felt for his service, and his country. While these lessons cannot be hung in a museum, they live in the minds and hearts of Sergeant Handschuh's family.

Liz Mowry and her family have kept her father's wartime memories as a reminder of his service. Now, these rare pieces of American history can teach us all more about the young Americans that fought in the early years of this century to protect this nation's future.

I add my sincere gratitude to that of the entire Pittsburgh community for the gift Ms. Mowry has bestowed on the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial. Our community has a long history of honoring military service, and her donation will continue that tradition, giving all Memorial visitor's the opportunity to learn more about the veterans of WWI.

TRIBUTE TO LEE WELINSKY

HON. JULIAN C. DIXON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 27, 1998

Mr. DIXON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call to the attention of the Congress the accomplishments of Lee Welinsky, a constituent and friend whose life and commitment to her family and community has exemplified the very best spirit of American citizenship. On Saturday, February 7, Lee's many friends and admirers will gather at the Red Lion Hotel in Culver City, California to honor her on her 70th birthday. It is a pleasure to join them in paying tribute to her.