The Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, referred to as HIPC, was developed in 1999 to provide debt relief to the world's poorest countries. The HIPC Initiative requires countries to invest the savings from debt relief in HIV–AIDS treatment and prevention, health care, education, and poverty reduction programs.

Unfortunately, the IMF and the World Bank have not provided their fair share of debt relief. While the United States agreed to cancel 100 percent of the debts owed by poor countries, the IMF and the World Bank have agreed to reduce these countries' debts by less than half. As a result, the countries that have begun to receive debt relief have seen their debt payments reduced by an average of only 27 percent. Most of these countries are still spending more money on debt payments than they are on health care.

Zambia provides an excellent illustration of what is wrong with the approach of the IMF and the World Bank. Zambia is a deeply impoverished country with a per capita income of only $330. The infant mortality rate exceeds 1 percent of live births, and 27 percent of Zambian children under 5 are malnourished. Zambia has also been ravaged by the HIV–AIDS pandemic. Almost 10 percent of the population is infected with the AIDS virus and 650,000 children have been orphaned by AIDS.

AIDS has also ravaged the educational system by causing a shortage of trained teachers. Yet Zambia's debt payments have actually increased following the receipt of debt relief. Moreover, Zambia spends more than twice as much money on debt payments as it does on health care.

How can the International Monetary Fund tell countries like Zambia to use savings from debt relief for poverty reduction when the IMF knows there is no savings?

On April 26, 2001, I introduced H.R. 1642, the Debt Cancellation for the New Millennium Act. This bill would require the IMF and the World Bank to provide complete cancellation of 100 percent of the debts owed to them by all 32 impoverished countries that are expected to qualify for the HIPC Initiative. The bill would also allow three additional impoverished countries, Bangladesh Haiti, and Nigeria, to participate in the HIPC Initiative. Furthermore, the bill would prohibit the imposition of user fees for education and health services and other structural adjustment programs as conditions for debt relief. Seventy-six Members of Congress representing both political parties have cosponsored this bill.

The IMF and the World Bank have sufficient resources to completely wipe away poor countries' debts. It is time for the IMF and the World Bank to do their share to make debt relief a reality for poor countries and their people. It is time for the IMF and the World Bank to allow these countries to invest their resources in health, education, and the elimination of poverty.

I urge President Bush and the world leaders who attend the G–8 summit to tell the IMF and the World Bank to completely cancel 100 percent of the debts of the world's most impoverished countries once and for all.

ELECTION REFORM

(Ms. WATSON of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WATSON of California. Mr. Speaker, it has now been almost 9 months since the election fiasco of the year 2000, and for 9 months America's leaders have talked about election reform, but little has been done.

This week yet another report was released detailing the breakdown of our voting process in America. A joint study by CalTech and MIT found that 4 to 6 million Americans lost their right to vote because of outdated or faulty voting equipment and a flawed process.

This might come as a shock to some people, but it should not. Last week my colleagues and I on the House Committee on Government Reform released another study detailing the same problem. Too many Americans are forced to use outdated or faulty voting equipment and too many of these faulty machines are concentrated in the communities of the poor and minority voters.

Mr. Speaker, we have had 9 months of study, 9 months of research, 9 months of reports. Now the American people want and deserve action. Mr. Speaker, please make election reform the number one priority of this House in time to make real lasting changes before next year's election.

BRINGING SOCIAL SECURITY INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

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

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, today the scare tactics began. A year ago today we had in hand a Social Security Trustees' report that was actually kind of optimistic. Things were looking up for the system. The day in which it would not be able to pay 100 percent of benefits was put off until the year 2039. That is, Social Security had in hand, under conservative estimates, enough money from our taxes, from the taxes of working people, not the wealthy, because they do not pay on any income over $80,000, but the working people had put enough money in the trust fund to secure it through the year 2039.

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No question. After that, with no changes, under pessimistic assumptions, it would only be able to pay 73 percent of the benefits. But here comes the Bush administration and the so-called Bipartisan Commission on Social Security loaded with people who have been trying to destroy the system, including, sadly, a couple of Members of the House and Senate who are ostensibly Democrats for more than a quarter of a century. They are doing the work of Wall Street.

Wall Street cannot wait to mandate that individuals put money into individual accounts. When they can charge 250 million people a little bit of money to maintain accounts, they make tens of billions of dollars. Guess where the tens of billions of dollars comes from? It comes from future benefits that people would have realized under the current system.

This document is extraordinary in that it echoes Treasury Secretary O'Neill. It says that the United States government might not honor the trillions of dollars of obligations it has in special bonds to the Social Security Trust Fund. They are saying the crisis starts the day Social Security has to begin drawing on the funds, the savings we have put aside for our retirement.

The Bush administration is questioning whether the full faith and credit of the United States government will be delivered on those debts, those obligations. If that is true, everybody around the world and across the United States better begin cashing in their Treasury bonds. If the United States Treasury in 2016 under the leadership of President Bush and Secretary O'Neill does not put the full faith and credit of our government behind those depository instruments, money that we, the working people, have paid into the Treasury for our retirement, then we are in bigger trouble than I thought.

Mr. Speaker, this is an unbelievable distortion of the facts. There is a simple solution to the Social Security problem, but we will not hear it from this administration or Secretary O'Neill who is worth hundreds of millions of dollars, or President Bush who is worth tens of millions of dollars, because it would require that they pay the same amount as every other American. They would rather talk about defaulting on the obligations of the Federal Treasury to honor Social Security Trust Funds than talk about the easiest way to solve this problem: Make every American pay the same amount of Social Security tax on every dollar they earn. They consider that a radical proposal.

If that one simple step were taken, if we lifted that cap, if people who earned over $80,000, that small percentage of the people, if they paid in the same Social Security that a minimum wage earner pays, a flat tax, I hear from the other side of the aisle, give us a flat tax. When I suggested this to the Republican chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, he almost had a stroke. Oh, no, not a real flat tax. We are talking about a flat tax that cuts taxes on the wealthy, not a flat tax that would give them the same obligation to pay as working people.

If we took that one step, Social Security under current assumptions would