

terrorism does not have anything to do with Islam as a religion and reinforces the effort we have been trying to make that the United States has Muslim allies in this effort. For Turkey, taking command of ISAF is an acknowledgment of Turkey's important position in that region and the role it can play in the Muslim world. It is also a signal of the important prestige Turkey has accumulated both here in the United States and in the West. The government in Ankara should be commended for its willingness to take on this critically important role. We congratulate Turkey and wish their military contingent the best of success.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not point out for commendation all of the other nations whose military forces are currently serving in Afghanistan. ISAF does have some 5,000 troops serving in Afghanistan and they all deserve our thanks and continued support. I think it is also important to note that the majority of the nineteen countries who have contributed forces to ISAF are not only European, but are from our NATO partners or NATO candidate countries. I believe this is an important point that is often overlooked by those who have criticized Alliances such as NATO for not being willing or capable of conducting missions abroad. The Afghanistan campaign was not a NATO mission but the fact that so many of our NATO partners have sent troops there is a testament to the importance of the Alliance and why we in this country should continue to strongly support NATO. Consider where we would be today if NATO was no longer relevant to our security needs. Whose 5,000 troops would be patrolling the streets of Kabul and ensuring the peaceful transition of that country.

So, again we salute the British forces for a job well done. We congratulate and welcome the Turkish leadership of ISAF and we thank our NATO allies and European friends for their continued support in Afghanistan and in the campaign against global terror.

IN SUPPORT OF THE DEMOCRATIC
SUBSTITUTE TO H.R. 4931, RE-
TIREMENT SAVINGS SECURITY
ACT OF 2002

SPEECH OF

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 21, 2002

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition of H.R. 4931, the Republicans' so-called Retirement Security Savings Act.

Like every other tax break the Republican leadership has brought to the floor lately, this bill is more about their political pandering than our priorities. But, I refuse to play games with the hard-earned pensions of working Americans while Republicans line the pockets of their wealthy contributors.

We ought to bring a pension bill to the floor that encourages saving and increases employee participation in pension plans. Unfortunately, the Republican bill does little to help average Americans save for retirement. It simply benefits the wealthiest Americans. Forty-two percent of the tax breaks proposed by the Republicans would go to the richest five percent of taxpayers.

Meanwhile, if you are an average American with a pension or retirement account, the Re-

publican plan does nothing to help you build upon that savings. Republicans are obviously content with the fact that most Americans have only about \$12,000 put away for retirement. I'm sure an Arthur Andersen accountant might be able to convince someone that \$12,000 is sufficient. But, to think the Republicans would expect that most Americans would believe it just shows how out of touch they are.

I support the Democratic plan for retirement security. It puts money where our mouth is when we say we want Americans to save. It rewards them for putting money away for their retirement by giving them a \$1,000 tax credit if they contribute to an employer-sponsored pension plan or an IRA.

Republicans supported giving lower and middle-income families this credit in the past. They included it in last year's tax bill. But, for some reason they won't support it today. Why not?

Maybe Republicans don't think it's necessary because they've already passed their huge tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans? Maybe they've just gotten too close with their corporate donors to appreciate the struggles many Americans face in building a secure retirement?

Whatever the answer may be, it is clear Republicans haven't learned anything from the Enron fiasco. This bill's second, major flaw is that does nothing to enforce corporate accountability when it comes to pensions. It doesn't prevent huge scams like Enron from being carried out on the backs of employees—it makes it easier. We shouldn't allow those that work hard for their retirement to be ripped off while a handful of greedy executives walk away with millions.

We should be on this floor today making sure that Enron never happens again. I support the Democratic plan because it will lock in real pension protection and ensure that workers are fairly compensated when companies fail. But, instead, we're stuck having to vote on a Republican bill that does nothing but reward corporate greed at the expense of millions of hard-working Americans.

I urge my colleagues to stand up for America's families, support the sensible Democratic plan for retirement security, and vote down the Republican bill.

SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAM
PROTECTION ACT OF 2002

SPEECH OF

HON. STEPHEN F. LYNCH

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 25, 2002

Mr. LYNCH. Mr. Speaker, today I stand before you to express my concerns on strengthening and preserving our nation's Social Security system.

We are here today to discuss, H.R. 4070, The Social Security Programs Protection Act. However, I have grave concerns about what we are NOT discussing—namely, privatization, one of the biggest threats facing the Social Security Program today.

Last week, Democrats filed a discharge petition to demand a public debate on privatization. Democrats think the public has a right to know about the true effects of privatization.

Under the Republican Privatization Plan, we would see cuts in guaranteed benefits, massive raids on the Social Security Trust Funds, and the threat that privatization poses to the ability of the system to pay benefits to the baby-boomer generation.

Mr. Speaker, Congress has a responsibility to our next generation to ensure that Social Security will be there for them. Social Security is more than a program, it is a promise. The Republican Leadership is refusing to bring their privatization bills to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, we have missed our mission of strengthening Social Security. We have missed our opportunity to strike, a true course consistent with the great traditions in this country of meeting the challenges of each generation. We can only live up to our responsibilities by preserving and strengthening our Social Security system. American families work hard to pay into the system, and they should be able to rely on Social Security when they retire.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to live up to the responsibility that has been bestowed upon us and to strengthen and preserve our Social Security system.

Thank you, I yield the remainder of my time.

CHILD OBSCENITY AND PORNOGRAPHY
PREVENTION ACT OF 2002

SPEECH OF

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 25, 2002

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I voted in favor of H.R. 4623, the Child Obscenity and Pornography Prevention Act of 2002. I strongly support the goal of this legislation, which is to protect children from sexual exploitation.

This legislation is in response to the United States Supreme Court's ruling in *Ashcroft v. The Free Speech Coalition*, which struck down portions of the Child Pornography Prevention Act that made it illegal to create, distribute or possess "virtual" child pornography produced by means other than using real children, such as using adult actors who look like children or through computer generated images.

In an effort to pass constitutional muster, this bill prohibits the creation, distribution or possession of computer generated images that appear "virtually indistinguishable" from that of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct. We should not allow technological advances to hamper law enforcement's ability to prosecute individuals for child pornography. Law enforcement agencies must have all necessary tools to eliminate sexual exploitation of innocent children.

However, I have concerns about how this legislation affects free speech protections under the First Amendment. H.R. 4623 criminalizes speech that not only is not obscene, but that has redeeming literary, artistic, or other social value. This includes therapists and academic researchers who use computer-generated images in their research, and filmmakers who create explicit anti-child abuse documentaries.

While I am hopeful that this legislation will pass constitutional scrutiny we must also ensure that we do not infringe upon the First