

For teachers, the cost is significant. The Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision affect at least one-third of America's education workforce, concentrated in 15 states, including my home state of Texas. But, because people move from state to state, there are affected individuals everywhere. I know from personal experience the penalty hard working teachers pay. My own mother, who spent nearly 30 years serving as a teacher in the public schools, has been adversely affected. We need to attract more people to teaching and public service. Adding onerous and additional unfair requirements to obtaining their retirement benefits will not solve the crisis we are having in attracting and retaining teacher professionals.

Since my election to Congress, I have worked to eliminate these two provisions. On March 1, 2001, I introduced H.R. 848, the Social Security Benefit Restoration Act. This bill will bring equity to retirement benefits. It will eliminate the public sector penalty and will allow civil servants to draw full Social Security benefits. I am also a cosponsor of H.R. 2638, the Social Security Fairness Act. This bill eliminates the Windfall Elimination Provision as well as the Government Pension Offset. Finally, I, along with an overwhelming majority of Members, have cosponsored H.R. 664, which also eliminates the Government Pension Offset.

My bill and the other legislation to eliminate these unjust provisions have been languishing in the House Ways and Means Committee. These bills are but another example of the long list of things the Republican leadership of the Congress has failed to address. To pass a bill that would make retirement less accessible for those who teach our children is unconscionable. We need to be doing more to strengthen the teaching profession and not adopt laws that make teaching less attractive to current and prospective teachers.

When the 108th Congress convenes next year, I will reintroduce my bill and work with my colleagues to eliminate these unfair provisions. Thousands of Texans who have devoted their lives to teaching and public service are entitled to the benefits they have spent a career earning. Basic fairness demands that Congress repeal these provisions and allow teachers and other public servants to collect all of their retirement benefits.

ON THE HISTORIC OCCASION OF
THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS
JOINT MEETING IN NEW YORK
TO COMMEMORATE THE TRAG-
EDY OF SEPTEMBER 11TH

HON. JUANITA MILLENDER-McDONALD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 22, 2002

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor for me as the Member of the United States Congress to convene here in New York today, September 9, 2002, on this historic occasion. It has been one year since the tragic terrorist attacks of September 11. It has been over two hundred years since Congress convened here in New York at Federal Hall to elect the first President of the United States and to ratify the Bill of Rights.

We applaud the people of this great city and state for their resolve in light of the devasta-

tion thrust upon them. It is a credit to their perseverance and their total commitment to freedom that the 107th Congress stands proud today. We reflect with remorse on the past year, but also look forward with hope and optimism as we proceed in the healing of our Nation. On this historic day, the congress has convened to mourn the loss of families and friends during the September 11 attacks, and to salute the heroism of our police officers, fire fighters, and emergency responders who performed with unbridled bravery and gave so selflessly on that tragic day.

As I reflect on the tragic events of a year ago, I am reminded of the heavy hearts of so many great Americans who have grappled with this cowardly act and for those who had loved ones who perished in New York, Pennsylvania and the Pentagon. For those who lost friends and coworkers and who must now try to go on with their lives, our prayers are offered to these families and their friends and to all America and other Countries who lost loved ones.

Today, we are expressing our gratitude to the fire fighters, police officers, healthcare workers and those individuals who, on that fateful day, performed heroic deeds and helped their fellow citizens and neighbors without regard for their own welfare.

During the recent year, my colleagues and I in Congress have actively engaged in debate about how to develop an agenda that addresses the new world in which we now live.

Though our country and the world have been shaken, we continue to build bridges toward progress and strengthen the bond of patriotism and the spirit of hope. I cannot express how important it is to map out a course for our future that will sustain, inspire and protect our children. We must provide our children with a sense of optimism and hope.

Our domestic efforts and grief over the tragic events of September 11 have heightened our appreciation for the pain of others around the world who have been subjected to the brutality and inhumanity of terrorism. That is why we have supported liberation and democratization efforts in Afghanistan and seek to assist in the rehabilitation of those persecuted and who are attempting to rebuild their lives and their country. We must complete our mission there.

As we return to Washington, our nation and its Congress will never forget the victims of September 11. On this occasion of reflection, recommitment and rededication to freedom and democracy, we are affirming our commitment to remember and honor the men and women who paid the ultimate price—their lives. They will always be a part of our history and our hearts. Our nation shall continue to rise to meet the challenge of terrorism and the threats posed by terrorists who seek to derail freedom and a Nation of peace.

H. RES. 598

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 22, 2002

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart and great sadness that I rise to honor my friend Senator Paul Wellstone, who died October 25 in a plane crash in Minnesota

along with his wife and daughter, three of his staff members and two pilots. The mark that Paul Wellstone left on the world was far, far greater than his small stature and down-to-earth nature would suggest. And so, the emptiness we feel at his passing is vast and deep. It stretches far beyond the personal pain of losing a friend, or the tragedy of his shattered family.

Senator Wellstone was a public servant in the most ideal sense of the term. Politics never became more important to him than the people he represented and the people he loved. Victory never became more important to him than voicing his true convictions. Power never became more important to him than his desire to serve the powerless.

On the campaign trail, Paul Wellstone drove an old green school bus across the state of Minnesota. From that bus Senator Wellstone tirelessly assured people that he would struggle for peace and fight for veterans, that he would work to stop the tide of domestic violence and mental illness, and that he would defend our fragile environment. Most of all, that old bus brought hope and excitement to people whom for too long, and for too many reasons, felt that their government had forgotten about them. Now that he is gone, that bus must not sit and rust away. We must have the courage, the commitment, and the strength to keep that bus rolling.

I will miss Paul Wellstone greatly. I know that we all will.

HONORING TERRY FARMER
HUMBOLDT COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 22, 2002

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Terry Farmer of Eureka, who is being honored for his twenty years of public service as the District Attorney of Humboldt County, California.

Mr. Farmer has had a long and distinguished career as a public servant in our community. He has served on numerous community boards and organizations to help make the community a better place in which to live. Prior to being appointed a deputy district attorney, he was elected to the Trinidad City Council and as a member of his local school board. He was elected District Attorney of Humboldt County in 1982.

As district attorney, Mr. Farmer strived to achieve an outstanding system of justice, defined by professionalism and integrity. He developed a culture of excellence that reinforced competence and ethical values within the office.

During his tenure, the district attorney's office assumed a leadership role in the Child Abuse Services Team, a consortium of law enforcement, child protective workers, mental health professionals and victims working to improve investigations, convict molesters, and protect children. The program remains a model throughout the state of California.

Mr. Farmer worked collaboratively to develop a program to crack down on the use of methamphetamine in our community, while working to increase public awareness and improve treatment services to deter people using the drug.