



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 108th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 149

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2003

No. 127

House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
September 16, 2003.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN BOOZMAN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a joint resolution of the following title in which the concurrence of the House of requested:

S.J. Res. 17. Joint resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Federal Communications Commission with respect to broadcast media ownership.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 106-170, the Chair, on behalf of the Democratic Leader, after consultation with the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Finance, announces the appointment of Andrew J. Imperato, of Maryland, to serve as a member of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel, vice Christine M. Griffin, of Massachusetts.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the par-

ties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) for 5 minutes.

FUTURE OF SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, in 5 minutes I am going to give a short tutorial on the bleak future of Social Security. A proposal that I just introduced, H.R. 3055 tries to make sure that we keep Social Security solvent. Social Security is one of the most successful programs in assuring that retirees continue to have some real social security.

After the Great Depression, Franklin Delano Roosevelt said what we should have is a program of forced savings during one's working years, to set aside to make sure that people have some money in retirement.

Well, as it turned out, the law that was passed provided that nothing was set aside in an individual's name. Existing workers paid in the Social Security tax and that was immediately sent out to current retirees. It was sort of a pay-as-you-go program.

It is, if you will, Mr. Speaker, like a chain letter. Uncle Sam says, look, here is a list of names; put your name at the bottom of the list and send a check to all those people above you. And when your name gets to the top when you retire, all of the people below you at that time will send you a check.

The problem is there will be fewer people to send you a check. There are two colliding forces, not only in the United States but across the world where the age of death is higher. We are living longer. And at the same time, the birth rate is going down.

In Europe, France now has a payroll tax of 51 percent. You make a dollar

and have to give 51 percent to the government to take care of the seniors in that country. That is because a pay-as-you-go program with such a large senior population and a reducing birth rate means fewer number of workers to pay in, which means each individual workers has to pay out more in taxes.

Let us not let the United States come to that predicament because it will mean one of two things: a company either charges, more for this products to pay for the extra cost of that tax or you pay workers less. Either way, it is bad for the future of our economy and our ability to compete with other countries.

Mr. Speaker, let me describe H.R. 3055: The trust fund continues in our bill. The Retirement Security Act would allow workers to create on a voluntary basis accounts funded from their payroll taxes. The accounts would start at 2.5 percent of income and would reach 8 percent by 2075, a slow process as you shift away from the pay-as-you-go. Workers would own the money in their accounts. Investments would be limited and widely diversified, and investment proceeds would be subject to government oversight.

The government would supplement the accounts of low-income workers making less than \$35,000 a year to ensure they build up a significant savings. What is important in those early years is the magic of compound interest, starting with a small amount of dollars and letting it grow. Again, it is an optional program.

People choosing to participate in the voluntary account program would continue to receive benefits directly from the government, and those benefits would be offset based on the amount of money going in. But they would be guaranteed so that the person that opts in to a personal retirement savings account would be guaranteed that they would be at least as well off as those that did not take that option.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

H8223

Worker accounts: all worker accounts would be owned by the worker and invested through pools supervised by the government. Regulations would be instituted to prevent people from taking undue risk. Until an account balance reaches \$2,500, a worker would be limited on the kind of index investments they could make; and after the balance reaches \$2,500, they would have more flexibility but only investing in safe accounts as determined by the Secretary of the Treasury.

The fairness to women's provision that we put in this bill: for married couples, account contributions would be pooled and then divided equally between the husband and wife. So whatever the husband and wife would be eligible to invest would be added together and divided by two so each spouse would have the same in their individual account. Second, it would increase surviving spouse benefits to 110 percent of the higher-earning spouse's benefits. Third, stay-at-home mothers with kids under 5 would receive retirement credit. In other words, we are saying for a spouse that stays home with those young kids, they can have those years credited at the average for the other years.

In conclusion, Social Security solvency, the Retirement Security Act has been scored by the Social Security Administration actuaries to keep the program solvent. There would be no increases in the retirement age, changes in benefits for seniors or near-seniors, or changes in the Social Security COLA.

Mr. Speaker, there are only 24 Members in the House and Senate that have ever signed onto a bill. We need to move ahead and save this program.

AMERICA DESERVES STRAIGHT TALK ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, this administration is well known for spinning the truth, a very polite term for a lamentable practice. For example, over two-thirds of the American public think that Saddam Hussein and the Iraqis have some linkage to the attack of September 11, when, 2 years after the fact, there remains no evidence, despite the efforts of the administration to rhetorically connect these events.

The administration's habit of using misleading language is at its worst with the environment. Their Clear Skies Initiative will actually permit dirtier air. Relaxation of the New Source Review rules will inhibit the intent of the Clean Air Act, which 30 years ago gave a reprieve to the dirtiest coal fired plants, a reasonable time to come into compliance. The New Source Review rules were designed so that when plants modernize, new anti pollution technology must be put in

place. Instead, the agencies have kept these aging dinosaurs in use because, simply, they make more money.

Rather than enforcing the Clean Air Act as previous administrations have done to encourage the industry, President Bush now proposes that these old plants continue to be grandfathered permanently. Changes to the New Source Rules announced last month will allow plants to make a 20 percent investment each year without triggering the New Source Rule. There is no reason for them to ever come into full compliance.

Because of the prevailing winds, the pollution is not just in the vicinity of the plant or in that State that allows it to operate. The effects are concentrated, particularly in the New England States. And attorneys general in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, as well as some midwest States like Wisconsin and Illinois are lining up to challenge this rule in court.

Yesterday, the President was in Michigan to promote his Clear Skies Initiative; but he had the audacity to appear at one of the Nation's dirtiest power plants in Monroe, which is responsible, we are told, for approximately 300 premature deaths each year.

The Detroit Free Press points out that the mercury emissions at that plant have gone up over the course of the last 2 years, and this Clear Skies Initiative will allow more mercury emissions than simply enforcing the current law.

The President attempted to paint to this as a jobs-creation issue; but local labor leaders pointed out that when the Monroe plant owner, Detroit Edison, found out that the New Source Review rules were going to be relaxed, they promptly stop their efforts to install pollution controls required by law and fired 800 union workers who had been installing them. Lost jobs, dirtier air, health problems for thousands.

The pending energy bill should be an opportunity to rectify these problems with cleaner air, reducing the dependence on foreign oil and maybe even protecting the power grid recently proven vulnerable. Instead, we currently have a grab bag of incentives for special interests that shortchanges efficiency, continues reliance on expensive imported foreign oil, and delays the day of reckoning for electrical power to clean the air and a more fuel-efficient auto industry.

It is not too late for the administration and the Congress to deal meaningfully with two or three of these items that would actually help the American public. It is not just protecting the environment and the health of our citizens; it is a matter of long-term economic stability and security at a time when we have almost 140,000 American troops in and around Iraq in no small measure to secure Middle East oil.

The Bush administration should be straight with the American public about the economic, environmental, and security consequences. Rather

than a misleading photo-op, we should work for the meaningful environmental progress that America deserves.

VICTORY'S PRICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY) is recognized during morning hour debates.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, a generation from now Iraq will either be a thriving democratic ally of the United States, or an enemy of unimaginable hatred, ruled by a violent government of, for, and by international terrorists.

A generation from now the battle of Iraq, now the central component of the war on terror, will have succeeded or have failed. America will have won or lost; and our brave heroes who gave their lives there will have sacrificed for virtue or died in vain.

The toppling of Saddam Hussein's status in Firdos Square will have been the dawn of an age of Middle East freedom and stability, or it will have been the cruel joke that ushered in an era of unspeakable terror in the region.

There is no middle ground. Freedom and terrorism cannot co-exist. This struggle between good and evil will be decided by victory or surrender, in security or in shame.

And the terrorists understand the stakes. That is why they swarmed like scorpions into Iraq. They know that their true enemy is not our weapons, but our own will. And thankfully, so does President George W. Bush. That is why he spoke to the Nation last week and announced his request for additional funds to prosecute the war.

The question now before us is whether we realize, as the terrorists do, that the separate stand they are making in Iraq is the last best hope for their evil ideology.

Mr. Speaker, our mission in Iraq is not related to the war on terror. It is the war on terror. The enemy has chosen to make his stand right there. And if victory is our aim, we must not yield until the last terrorist in Iraq is in a cell or in a cemetery. Whether it costs \$87 billion or \$187 billion, our absolute victory in the war and the peace is worth any price, because without victory, there will be no survival.

□ 1245

If we are to take the war on terror seriously, we must spend what it takes to win. Critics and candidates may measure wars by the dollars that they cost, but the American people will measure this war, as we did in World War II and the Cold War, by the lives it saves, the evil it destroys and the freedom it preserves.

ADMINISTRATION PLAYING FAST AND LOOSE WITH THE FACTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr.