

increasingly owned by foreign countries, we should act in a way that is fiscally responsible. And at a time when it is harder to qualify for pension benefits, Congress should undertake meaningful pension reform rather than continuing to weaken the three-legged stool of a solid and well-rounded retirement plan.

Mr. Speaker, Congress needs to take the long-term difficulties facing Social Security seriously, but we must be fair and comprehensive about our solutions. It is irresponsible to characterize Social Security's fiscal situation as one of imminent collapse. In order to make good decisions about the future of the program, we must engage in an honest debate about the longer-term problems facing Social Security, and that includes a real and accurate accounting of the cost of privatization as we debate the budget over the upcoming months.

The data on the proposals to privatize Social Security show that private accounts do little to improve the financial health of the program. Indeed, the massive transition cost, an estimated \$1.4 trillion over the first 10 years and another \$3.5 trillion over the following decade, will hasten the date of Social Security's insolvency.

Importantly, even without changes, without any changes, Social Security will be able to pay full benefits for nearly 40 years, according to the more conservative estimates of Social Security's own actuaries. After that, Social Security will continue to pay 75 to 85 percent of scheduled benefits. So, clearly, younger workers and future generations are not going to be inheriting a Social Security System that is bankrupt.

I share the concern of many independent commentators that efforts to fix Social Security through privatization will ultimately do more harm than good. What we need is a broader debate about real retirement security. If we approach that debate with an open mind and the resolve to strengthen Social Security as well as enhance opportunities for private savings, we can ensure that generations of Americans can look forward to spending the best years of their lives without worrying about how to pay for their basic needs. Americans of all ages deserve nothing less.

SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. SCOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to spend just a few minutes talking about these private accounts and emphasizing two groups, young people and African Americans.

I want to state first out that President Bush insists that he is undertaking this drastic dismantling of Social Security for the good of our young

people. He wants Americans to believe that private accounts are a great deal and a good deal for those under age 55. But the President is wrong. Privatizing Social Security not only does not help; it is a hindrance to the financial security of young people for several reasons.

First of all, these private accounts will not be monies handed to young people to invest as they see fit. Plans will be chosen for the young people, and these plans will be complex, complicated; they will have certain restrictions and limits, and then there is that troublesome annuity requirement.

All I say to young people across America today is to look at this privatization and examine it very, very carefully. I want young people to do something else. I hope that most young Americans will think about how their lives will change if their parents do not have Social Security on which to rely. In fact, without Social Security, their parents will likely have to rely on them for a portion of their income. And caring for aging parents is difficult enough for adult children without the added burden of having to replace income from promised Social Security benefits, which will be lost due to the President's privatization plan.

As a senior Bush administration official admitted last week, "Private personal accounts will do absolutely nothing to fix Social Security's fiscal problems."

The President claims he will not cut benefits for current retirees to fund his proposal. He claims he will not raise payroll taxes. Well, the only thing left is to borrow the money, thereby increasing the deficit, a deficit that will have to be paid, of course, you guessed it, by younger workers, the very group that the President is saying he is trying to help.

Another sad misrepresentation of the President's plan is his insistence that young people will be able to invest their money as they see fit. In reality, the plan will only allow workers a choice from among a handful of investment options, not the entire stock market, and not as you see fit. If young people believe they will have the ability to invest their payroll taxes in any stock or mutual fund they choose, they are wrong.

Once again, this plan is not what it seems, and I hope the young people will realize the problems inherent in the privatization of Social Security. Look for yourself. This may be a Trojan horse.

Now, I want to say that I like President Bush personally. I have been one of those few Democrats who have worked with the President on many of his proposals. But I have been recently disturbed when President Bush said that since black men die sooner than whites, Social Security is a bad deal for them and private accounts is a better deal.

Well, I agree with Columnist Paul Krugman, who noticed recently that

President Bush has blatantly manipulated the facts and made false assertions, all in the hope of convincing African Americans that this is a good deal for us. The claim that black people get a bad deal from Social Security because of a shorter life expectancy is wrong.

Mr. Bush's use of this false argument is doubly shameful. I do believe he is getting some bad advice on this, because I know the President, and I know that he is a decent person. But inadvertently, when he makes the claim that Social Security is bad for black people because they die younger, he is exploiting the high black youth mortality rate to promote this privatization plan instead of trying to remove the deep inequities that remain and that black people face in our society.

The black population's low life expectancy is largely due to high death rates in childhood and young adulthood, before we even get started. The childhood infancy mortality rate among black people is three times the national rate. We are there before we even get started.

So when the President makes this kind of statement, it is sort of like cutting the legs out from under a man and then condemning him for being a cripple. We know that when African American men make it to 65, they collect the same amount of benefits and they live 14 or 15 years additionally, almost up to the 16 years of white Americans.

In conclusion, I would just like to say that Social Security is a good program for all Americans. The President's proposal to privatize the program is not. Social Security gives people with lower earning a greater return on what they paid. I just want to say to the American people to look very carefully and let us stand up for what is right; let us stand up for what is good about America. And what is right and what is good for America is to strengthen Social Security, not weaken it. And these private accounts will weaken it.

JOINT BAPTIST BOARD MEETING POINTS OF AGREED ACTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WATSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I think at the beginning of Negro History Month it is important to report on the Joint Baptist Board Meeting that was held January 24 to 27, 2005, where they jointly, through their presidents, affirmed the following points of agreed action that stem from the forum sessions presented during that meeting.

They said: we call for an end to the war in Iraq and withdrawal of U.S. military personnel. The war in Iraq, described by the Department of Defense as Operation Iraqi Freedom, is a costly and unnecessary military action begun on grossly inaccurate, misconstrued, or distorted intelligence against a nation

that did not pose an immediate or realistic threat to the national security of our Nation. No weapons of mass destruction have been discovered in Iraq, despite intense efforts to locate them.

The brutal regime of Saddam Hussein and its terror on Iraqi society has been replaced by the brutality and chaos of an ongoing war, which has ravaged the land, ransacked cherished aspects of Iraqi history and culture, and threatened the prospect of what even U.S. intelligence analysts fear could be a civil war.

More than 1,400 U.S. military personnel have lost their lives, and more than 10,000 have been wounded in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Over 5,000 of the wounded casualties have been severe enough to prevent return to action. Quoting from a front page story in the January 26, 2005 issue of U.S. Today, it says: "The Baptists look upon the sorrow, suffering, and financial cost of the war in Iraq and remember the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., a black Baptist preacher who challenged the military engagement in Vietnam more than two generations ago.

King's call that we admit the wicked and tragic folly about our self-righteous choice for war rather than peace and nonviolent change reminds us that preference for war always reflects the wrong values. Unnecessary and unjust war does not produce genuine peace, only death, suffering, more violence and more hate.

What King said in 1967 when he began his public outcry against the war in Vietnam is still true today. "A true," to quote him, "revolution of values will lay hands on the world order and say of war: 'This business of settling differences is not just.' This business of filling our Nation's homes with orphans and widows, of injecting poisonous drugs of hate into the veins of people normally humane, of sending men home from dark and bloody battlefields physically handicapped and psychologically deranged, cannot be reconciled with wisdom, justice, love or an election.

□ 1845

"A Nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death. There is nothing except a tragic death wish to prevent us from reordering our priorities so that the pursuit of peace will take precedence over the pursuit of war."

As religious leaders whose constituents have family members in the U.S. Armed Forces serving in Iraq and elsewhere around the world, we pray for the security of our Nation and the safety of our military personnel. We weep with families who mourn the deaths of their loved ones, and we share the anxiety of families concerning the well-being of those who press on in service.

Our call that our Nation end its military involvement in Iraq does not rise from a lack of support for our Armed

Forces, disregard for national security, or lack of resolve concerning freedom and democracy. Rather, we are concerned about our troops and our military families whose loved ones have been ordered to fight and stay in a war that our leaders refuse to even send their own children and the children of the wealthy into.

Mr. Speaker, I implore the President to bring our troops home now.

As religious leaders whose constituents have family members in the U.S. armed forces serving in Iraq and elsewhere around the world, we pray for the security of our nation and the safety of our military personnel. We weep with families who mourn the deaths of their loved ones and we share the anxiety of families concerning the well-being of those who press on in service. Our call that our nation end its military involvement in Iraq does not rise from lack of support for our armed forces, disregard for national security, or lack of resolve concerning freedom and democracy. Rather, we are concerned about our troops and our military families whose loved ones have been ordered to fight and stay in a war that our leaders refuse to even send their own children and the children of wealthy families to fight. Again, we quote Dr. King's words:

I am as deeply concerned about our troops there [Vietnam] as anything else. For it occurs to me that what we are submitting them to in Vietnam is not simply the brutalizing process that goes on in any war where armies face each other and seek to destroy. We are adding cynicism to the process of death, for they must know after a short period there that none of the things we claim to be fighting for are really involved. Before long they must know that their government has sent them into a struggle among Vietnamese, and the more sophisticated surely realize that we are on the side of the wealthy and the secure while we create a hell for the poor.

The war in Iraq is not only creating a hell for the poor in Iraq. The grief and suffering it has wrought have been disproportionately forced onto the lives of poor and struggling families in our nation. These families, far more than those who are wealthy, send their loved ones to serve as members of the active force or as reservists and members of the National Guard. It is not just or patriotic for our leaders to thrust the sons and daughters of low income families into unnecessary military engagements.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. (Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CUELLAR addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may

have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, President Bush has made it clear that the time has come for an honest, straightforward, realistic discussion about the future of our precious Social Security system. For today's generation of senior citizens, the system is strong and fiscally sound, but younger workers are concerned about whether Social Security will be around for them when they need it.

The problem is simple. With an aging population and a steadily falling ratio of workers to retirees, the system is on a course to eventual bankruptcy. Here is the problem, and this is best demonstrated on the graph next to me.

Social Security was designed in 1935 for a different world than the one we live in today. It is a pay-as-you-go system in which the benefits go to current retirees and they come directly from the payroll taxes of current workers. When the program was still new in the 1940s, there were 41 workers paying in for every retiree drawing benefits. By 1950, 16 workers paid in for every person drawing out. Today it is about three workers for every beneficiary. And by the time our youngest workers turn 65, the ratio will be down to two workers for each beneficiary.

At present, Social Security operates with a substantial cash surplus. In just a few years, when the baby boomers retire and begin collecting benefits, the surplus will begin to decline. Then, in 2018, that is just 13 years away, Social Security will begin paying out more than it receives in payroll taxes. From then on the shortfalls will grow larger and larger every year until 2042 when the Social Security trustees estimate the system will reach fiscal collapse.

If we look at this chart, we can see we are here in a surplus situation, but then we get to 2018 and we start to dip down. We still have Treasury bills, and Congress is going to have to find the money to pay benefits. That line continues to go down with ever-increasing deficits for the next 75 years and beyond.

I want Members to notice the slope of this line. The further out, the more steep it gets, going down. And look at the figure, that is a \$26 trillion deficit in cash flow over the next 75 years. That is unacceptable. At that point, with a projected shortfall in trillions of dollars, the government will have no option other than to suddenly and dramatically reduce benefit payments by over 25 percent or to impose a massive economic, devastating tax increase on all Americans. And I am not talking about 2075, I am talking about right in here. Within 13 years from now, that decision is going to have to be made by a future Congress.

The longer we wait to address the coming crisis, the more difficult and