

The perception is that working mothers and parents have a greater desire for workplace flexibility than other workers; the reality is that men and women, parents and non-parents, young and older workers alike place a high priority on increased flexibility at work. We all want more time.

A study by the Employment Family Foundation found that 75 percent of workers prefer time off instead of overtime and 81 percent of women prefer to have that benefit.

For many employers, flexible work arrangements are necessary to attract and retain quality employees. In return for offering employees alternative work arrangements and greater flexibility in work schedules, employers gain a workforce that is more productive, committed and focused. For example an insurance company in my home State of Washington saw per-employee revenue increase 70 percent over 5 years after implementing flexible work options.

In talking with Wayne Williams who runs Telect in Spokane, Washington, he told me that they are doing more to give their employees greater flexibility including personal days and technology to give them the flexibility to work from home.

This isn't just a workforce issue, it is also a community and family issue.

The bill I am introducing would allow private sector employers to offer their employees additional time off in lieu of overtime pay. One of the greatest obstacles to flexibility in the workplace is the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act (known as the "FLSA"), which governs the work schedules and pay of millions of hourly workers. While the law may have been a good fit for the workforce of 70 years ago, it is simply not relevant to the needs of modern families.

Our labor force isn't what it used to be. Between 1950 and 2000, the labor force participation rate of women between 25 and 55 years of age more than doubled. Today, more than 75 percent of these women are in the labor market. Less than 12 percent of mothers with children under the age of 6 were in the labor force in 1950. Today, more than 60 percent work outside the home.

The FLSA fails to address the needs and preferences of employees in the area of flexible work schedules. Although salaried employees typically have greater flexibility in their day-to-day schedules, hourly employees are much more restricted—due in large part to the outdated FLSA—in their ability to gain greater flexibility in their work schedules.

The goal of the Family-Friendly Workplace Act is simple: to reconcile the overtime requirements under the FLSA with employee demands for increased workplace flexibility. Specifically, the bill would give private sector employers the option of allowing their employees to voluntarily choose paid compensatory time off (known as "comp time") in lieu of overtime pay. Since 1985, public sector employees have been able to bank comp time hours in order to have additional time off for vacation or other family needs. There is no justification for denying private sector employees an option under the FLSA which, by most accounts, has been successful and immensely popular with public sector hourly employees for over 20 years.

To be clear, the Family-Friendly Workplace Act would not change the employer's obligation under the FLSA to pay overtime at the

rate of one-and-one-half times an employee's regular rate of pay for any hours worked over 40 in a seven-day period. The bill would simply allow overtime compensation to be given—at the employee's request—as paid comp time off, at the rate of one-and-one-half hours of comp time for each hour of overtime worked, provided the employee and the employer agree on that form of overtime compensation. The bill contains numerous protections to ensure that the choice and use of comp time is a decision made by the employee.

Since we can't do anything about adding more hours to the day, I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting something that gives us a little more flexibility in how we spend that time—the Family-Friendly Workplace Act. We need to respond to the growing needs of workers who want to better integrate work and family. Let's allow working women and men to decide for themselves whether paid time off or extra pay best fits their needs and that of their families.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF DANNY  
FEDERICI

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 13, 2008*

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life long achievements of musician Danny Federici, long-time organ and accordion player for the E Street Band, a band that has become a staple of modern day American culture. Over his four-decade long career, Mr. Federici's signature style of playing has affected and inspired the lives of innumerable musicians and fans around the world.

Born in Flemington, New Jersey, Danny Federici began teaching himself how to play the accordion at the age of seven. His talents quickly earned him many local radio gigs, where he performed classical and polka music. A truly natural musician, it was he and original E Street Band drummer Vini Lopez, who invited Bruce Springsteen to join their band as they began conquering the music scene on the colorful boardwalk of Asbury Park, New Jersey. Often introduced by Springsteen as "Phantom Dan", he spent forty years lending his spontaneous and soulful playing to the countless performances of the E Street Band. Mr. Federici was one of the pillars of their signature sound and his playing evoked the boardwalk at Asbury Park, where he and his fellow band mates spent their childhood together. His accordion playing is most memorable in E Street Band hits such as "Fourth of July" and "Asbury Park".

During the time he spent away from the E Street Band, he recorded two solo albums, both jazz instrumentals. He had an unbreakable dedication to his music and his band mates but even more so to his wife Maya, and his three children, Jason, Harley and Madison. During his battle with Melanoma, he set up the Danny Federici Melanoma Fund, in the hopes that he could help others who were facing the same challenges that he was. His talents will forever be remembered by his family, friends, fans and band mates. In the words of Bruce Springsteen, "Those you are with, in the presence of miracles, you never forget. Life does not does separate you. Death does not sepa-

rate you. Those you are with who create miracles for you, like Danny did for me every night."

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honoring the life of Danny Federici, whose inspiration and musical genius will continue to touch the lives of generations to come.

FORECLOSURE PREVENTION ACT  
OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. THELMA D. DRAKE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, May 8, 2008*

Mrs. DRAKE. Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to thank Chairman FRANK, Ranking Member BACHUS and the Committee for their hard work. They have presented a thoughtful and creative proposal.

Housing is a very complex issue—it is also a very emotional one. We aren't just talking about abstract concepts, we are talking about a person's home. We're talking about real people with a real problem.

Prior to Congress I was a Realtor for over 20 years. I have worked with many families to help them realize their dream of home ownership. I have also served as chairman of the Virginia Housing Study Commission. Housing is an important issue for me and something I feel very strongly about.

I have seen good markets and bad. I have witnessed many changes to the mortgage market. I have struggled with how to define and protect against predatory lending practices. I have seen interest rates and loan products that seemed too good to be true—unfortunately, we have seen that in fact, many were too good to be true. I rise today to share my observations and concerns about the bill before us.

There are many components of this bill which I think are excellent and fully support. First Federal Housing Administration modernization is long overdue. FHA must be streamlined and made more efficient. Government Sponsored Enterprise regulatory reform would also help stabilize the housing market. I support an amendment to be offered today that will create a first time home buyer tax credit for low- to mid-income buyers. This would increase the number of buyers in the market—increasing demand now for an oversupply of homes. The bill also increases funding for foreclosure counselors and financial education. I also appreciate the additional funding for law enforcement to prevent mortgage fraud, and that Department of Veterans' Affairs loan limits are raised, and the enhanced appraisal standards and appraisal independence.

These are all well thought out, very important reforms that will help American families and the marketplace.

However, my concerns with today's package include the establishment of a new affordable housing fund to create new grants that can be directed to organizations that work specifically on housing issues. The bill does contain a provision that will prohibit the use of these grant funds for political activities, the fact is that many of the possible recipients engage in partisan political activities and therefore should