

CSRS ought to be covered by the system they should have been in, in most cases FERS.

Unlike the House retirement corrections bill, if the employee chooses to be placed in FERS, he or she will be responsible for the lost contributions to his or her thrift savings account. The House bill sought to achieve accountability by holding those agencies guilty of making enrollment errors responsible for the lost contributions to the employee's TSP account.

Mr. Speaker, though we would have preferred the House bill, we worked with the Senate to reach consensus on a bill that would result in some, if not optimal relief for employees placed in the wrong retirement system. H.R. 4040 is a lesson in how the legislative process through bipartisanship and compromise can work to better the lives of the American people. I enthusiastically support this legislation and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Is there objection to the initial request of the gentleman from Florida?

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I do not object, but I do want to celebrate this time when we in this House accept this bill, H.R. 4040, as amended, and send it back for the clarification from the Senate. This long-term care insurance bill has taken a lot of time. It has been long term, but it has been worth it.

I introduced legislation; my colleagues introduced legislation. We all worked together on it. The legislation I introduced was H.R. 1111, and it included not only Federal employees and annuitants, but it included also the military employees and retirees, which made the pool 20 million, which will allow OPM, the Office of Personnel Management, to be able to negotiate to get the very best plan that will have consumer protections and will also have choices within it.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of groups helped out with it, my colleagues; the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SCARBOROUGH), who chaired the committee; the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), the ranking member; others on the committee worked on it also, as well as organizations, like the National Association of Retired Federal Employees, the Postal Workers, Alzheimer's, retired military, and OPM was engaged also in the process, so all of us will be able to gain from this, the United States will be able to gain from it.

We hope that the premiums would be reduced 15 percent to 20 percent, and people will be able to plan for their futures through this bill. So I urge this bill's approval as amended, H.R. 4040.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. MORELLA. I yield to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Maryland

(Mrs. MORELLA) and also certainly thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), the ranking member of the committee, he and the gentlewoman from Maryland have both worked diligently on their own versions of this bill, both believed very much that their versions were the best versions of the bill, as did I on mine. Both of them worked around the clock.

The great thing is, I think we have got the best of all worlds from every bill. And I know there are so many people in my district that have a better long-term health care insurance plan because of what the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) did, and obviously because of what the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) did.

I have so many Federal retirees, military retirees, in my district that are grateful for the hard work they have done, work they did before I even became chairman of this committee, the work that the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) did. The gentleman from Indiana (Chairman BURTON) certainly helped; the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), the ranking member, helped a great deal; the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. DAVIS); the gentleman from Texas (Chairman ARCHER).

I would also like to thank our staffs that worked for a very, very long time on this bill, on my staff in particular, Gary Ewing and Jennifer Hemingway, but it is going to help everybody.

Long-term care security is a consensus bill. It is reflective of the hard work of Members on both sides of the aisle, and it is going to provide really assurance to Federal employees and retirees and military retirees, and so many others that they are going to be taken care of, and they are going to be able to get long-term health care insurance. It is important for all us.

The Senate language on long-term care is identical to the language that the House passed just last May. The bill also contains provisions to correct a long-standing inequity for Federal employees who, through no fault of their own, were erroneously placed in the wrong retirement system.

The amendments make several technical changes to the retirement corrections portion of this bill. And, in addition, in consultation, with Senator THOMPSON, I am pleased to include employees of the Tennessee Valley Authority, among the list of those eligible to purchase long-term care insurance. It is not only good for them, it is not only good for Federal employees that work here and throughout Washington, the country, it is good for all of America.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that this bill is going to be landmark legislation that the private sector will be able to follow and we will be able to provide long-term health care to all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, I urge Members to support H.R. 4040, as amended.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

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

There was no objection.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill and a concurrent resolution of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 2869. An act to protect religious liberty, and for other purposes.

S. Con. Res. 132. Concurrent resolution providing for a conditional adjournment or recess of the Senate and conditional adjournment of the House of Representatives.

PERMISSION FOR COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE TO HAVE UNTIL MIDNIGHT AUGUST 31, 2000 TO FILE A REPORT ON H.R. 4271, NATIONAL SCIENCE EDUCATION ACT

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Science may have until midnight on August 31, 2000 to file a report to accompany H.R. 4271.

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

There was no objection.

SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL HEALTH CENTER WEEK

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 381) expressing the sense of the Congress that there should be established a National Health Center Week to raise awareness of health services provided by community, migrant, and homeless health centers, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, actually, I stand not to object, but to end up praising those who have come forth. As the sponsor of this resolution, I want to, first of all commend and thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS); the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. CAPUANO), cochair of the Health Center Caucus; the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BONILLA), cochair of the Health Center Caucus; the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), who is also a cochair of the Health Center Caucus; the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL); the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. CRAMER); the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EVANS); the gentleman from