

NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON SOCIAL SECURITY ACT OF 1998

APRIL 23, 1998.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. ARCHER, from the Committee on Ways and Means,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 3546]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Ways and Means, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 3546) to provide for a national dialogue on Social Security and to establish the Bipartisan Panel to Design Long-Range Social Security Reform, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with an amendment and recommend that the bill as amended do pass.

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The amendment is as follows:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “National Dialogue on Social Security Act of 1998”.

TITLE I—NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON SOCIAL SECURITY

SEC. 101. ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL DIALOGUE.

As soon as practicable after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Majority Leader of the Senate shall jointly convene a National Dialogue on the old-age, survivors, and disability insurance program under title II of the Social Security Act. The purpose of the National Dialogue shall be to engage, by means of regional conferences and national Internet exchanges, the American public in understanding the current program, the problems it faces, and the need to find solutions that will be workable for all generations and to generate comments, suggestions, and recommendations from the citizens for social security reform.

SEC. 102. FACILITATORS.

The National Dialogue conducted pursuant to section 101 shall operate under the administration and coordination of two Facilitators, one of whom shall be appointed by the President, in consultation with the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives and the Minority Leader of the Senate, and one of whom shall be appointed jointly by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Majority Leader of the Senate. The Facilitators shall be appointed within 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act. The Facilitators shall be appointed from among individuals known for their integrity, impartiality, and good judgment, who are, by reason of their education, experience, and attainments, exceptionally qualified to perform the duties of such office. The Facilitators may serve until termination of the National Dialogue under section 108.

SEC. 103. PLANS FOR NATIONAL DIALOGUE.

After consultation with the President, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, the Majority Leader of the Senate, and the Minority Leader of the Senate, the Facilitators shall transmit the final plans for the development and operations of the National Dialogue to the President and each House of the Congress not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 104. DIALOGUE COUNCIL.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT AND DUTIES.**—There is established a Dialogue Council. It shall be the duty of the Dialogue Council to advise the Facilitators in the development and operations of the National Dialogue.

(b) **MEMBERSHIP.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Dialogue Council shall be composed of 36 of the individuals nominated pursuant to paragraph (2), of whom—

(A) 9 shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives,

(B) 4 shall be appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives,

(C) 9 shall be appointed by the Majority Leader of the Senate,

(D) 4 shall be appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate, and

(E) 10 shall be appointed by the President.

To the extent practicable, the members shall include both men and women and shall be selected so as to ensure that individuals born before 1946, individuals born in or after 1946 and before 1961, and individuals born in or after 1961 are equally represented within the membership.

(2) **NOMINATIONS.**—Individuals shall be appointed under paragraph (1) from a group of 50 individuals, consisting of individuals nominated in sets of 2 each, respectively, by each of the following 25 private organizations:

(A) American Association of Retired Persons;

(B) United Seniors Association;

(C) American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations;

(D) The National Hispanic Council on Aging;

(E) The Older Women's League;

(F) Association of Private Pension and Welfare Plans;

(G) Cato Institute;

(H) Employee Benefit Research Institute;

(I) Americans Discuss Social Security;

(J) Third Millennium;

(K) The U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce;

(L) Americans for Hope, Growth, and Opportunity;

(M) National Federation of Independent Businesses;

(N) The Concord Coalition;

(O) National Caucus and Center on Black Aged;

(P) Campaign for America's Future;

(Q) The Heritage Foundation;

(R) The Brookings Institution;

(S) The 2030 Center;

(T) National Council of Senior Citizens;

(U) Center on Budget and Policy Priorities;

(V) National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare;

(W) United States Chamber of Commerce;

(X) Pension Rights Center; and

(Y) Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities.

(c) **ADMINISTRATION.**—The Dialogue Council shall meet at the call of the Facilitators. The Dialogue Council shall be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Members of the Council shall receive no pay, allowances, or benefits by reason of their service on the Council (other than any private funding of costs pursuant to section 105).

(d) **TERMINATION.**—The Dialogue Council shall terminate upon the termination of the National Dialogue under section 108.

SEC. 105. PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS.

The National Dialogue conducted pursuant to section 101 shall operate by means of sponsorship by private, nonpartisan organizations of conferences which shall be convened in localities across the Nation, which shall be geographically representative of the Nation as a whole, and which shall provide for participation which is representative of all age groups in the population. The Facilitators shall encourage and coordinate the sponsorship by such organizations of the National Dialogue and shall ensure that all costs relating to the functions of the Facilitators and the Dialogue Council under sections 104 and 107 and not referred to in section 109 are borne by such organizations or, as appropriate, by other private contributions. The source and amounts of contributions made pursuant to this section shall be made available to the public.

SEC. 106. CONSTITUENCY INPUT.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—In order to assure that the widest possible degree of opinion is received by Members of Congress regarding the future of the old-age, survivors, and disability insurance program under title II of the Social Security Act, each Member shall, to the extent practicable, and as soon as possible after the date of the enactment of this Act, develop with grassroots organizations and other constituency groups within the Member's district ongoing systems of communication through the use of the Internet and other available electronic capabilities. Such groups shall include, but not be limited to, key opinion leaders, journalists, business representatives, union members, and students of all age groups.

(b) INTERNET DIALOGUE COORDINATION.—

(1) **INTERNET DIALOGUE COORDINATOR.**—The Facilitators shall appoint an Internet Dialogue Coordinator who shall assist Members of Congress in establishing systems of communication as required under subsection (a). In carrying out the Coordinator's duties, the Coordinator shall—

- (A) establish a national dialogue web site,
- (B) assist Members' offices in establishing connections to the national dialogue web site, moderated chat rooms, and threaded newsgroups,
- (C) assist Members in coordinating a national electronic town hall meeting on the future of social security,
- (D) advise Members regarding the most effective technological means for reaching out to constituent groups for purposes of this section, and
- (E) work with other Internet-oriented groups to broaden the reach of Internet capability for purposes of this section.

(2) INTERNET ADVISORY BOARD.—

(A) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established an Internet Advisory Board. It shall be the duty of the Board to advise the Internet Dialogue Coordinator in the most appropriate and effective means of employing the Internet under this section.

(B) **MEMBERSHIP.**—The Board shall consist of 3 members appointed by the Facilitators from among individuals recognized for their expertise relating to the Internet.

(C) **ADMINISTRATION.**—The Board shall meet at the call of the Internet Dialogue Coordinator. The Board shall be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act. Members of the Board shall receive no pay, allowances, or benefits by reason of their service on the Board, except that any member of the Board who is not otherwise an officer or employee of the Federal Government shall receive travel expenses and per diem in lieu of subsistence in accordance with sections 5702 and 5703 of title 5, United States Code.

(c) **REPORTS.**—The Internet Dialogue Coordinator shall periodically report in writing to the Facilitators the results of the systems of communication established pursuant to this section.

(d) **TERMINATION.**—The provisions of this section shall terminate upon the termination of the National Dialogue under section 108.

SEC. 107. REPORTS.

From time to time during the National Dialogue, the Facilitators shall catalog, summarize, and submit in writing to the Bipartisan Panel to Design Long-Range Social Security Reform the comments, suggestions, and recommendations generated by the participants in conferences conducted and constituent input received from Members' offices under the National Dialogue.

SEC. 108. TERMINATION.

The National Dialogue conducted pursuant to section 101 shall terminate January 1, 1999.

SEC. 109. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated, from amounts otherwise available in the general fund of the Treasury, such sums as are necessary to provide for the compensation of the Facilitators and to carry out the provisions of section 106.

TITLE II—BIPARTISAN PANEL TO DESIGN LONG-RANGE SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM

SEC. 201. ESTABLISHMENT OF PANEL.

There is established a panel to be known as the Bipartisan Panel to Design Long-Range Social Security Reform (in this title referred to as the "Panel").

SEC. 202. DUTIES OF PANEL.

The Panel shall design a single set of legislative and administrative recommendations for long-range reforms for restoring the solvency of the social security system and maintaining retirement income security in the United States.

SEC. 203. MEMBERSHIP OF THE PANEL.

(a) **NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.**—The Panel shall be composed of eight members, of whom—

- (1) four shall be appointed jointly by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Majority Leader of the Senate,

(2) two shall be appointed by the President, and

(3) two shall be appointed jointly by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives and the Minority Leader of the Senate.

The members of the Panel shall consist of individuals who are of recognized standing and distinction, who can represent the multiple generations who have a stake in the viability of the system, and who possess a demonstrated capacity to discharge the duties imposed on the Panel. At least one of the members shall be appointed from individuals representing the interests of employees, and at least one of the members shall be appointed from individuals representing the interests of employers.

(b) CO-CHAIRS.—The officials referred to in paragraphs (1) through (3) of subsection (a) shall designate two of the members of the Panel to serve as Co-Chairs of the Panel, who shall jointly chair the Panel, determine its duties, and supervise its staff.

(c) TERMS OF APPOINTMENT.—The members of the Panel shall serve for the life of the Panel.

(d) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Panel shall not affect the power of the remaining members to execute the duties of the Panel, but any such vacancy shall be filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was made.

SEC. 204. PROCEDURES.

(a) MEETINGS.—The Panel shall meet at the call of its Co-Chairs or a majority of its members.

(b) QUORUM.—A quorum shall consist of 5 members of the Panel, except that a lesser number may conduct a hearing under subsection (c).

(c) HEARINGS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES.—For the purpose of carrying out its duties, the Panel may hold such hearings and undertake such other activities as the Panel determines to be necessary to carry out its duties. Meetings held by the Panel shall be conducted in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

(d) OBTAINING INFORMATION.—Upon request of the Panel, the Commissioner of Social Security and the head of any other agency or instrumentality of the Federal Government shall furnish information deemed necessary by the Panel to enable it to carry out its duties.

SEC. 205. ADMINISTRATION.

(a) COMPENSATION.—Except as provided in subsection (b), members of the Panel shall receive no additional pay, allowances, or benefits by reason of their service on the Panel.

(b) TRAVEL EXPENSES AND PER DIEM.—Each member of the Panel who is not a present Member of the Congress and who is not otherwise an officer or employee of the Federal Government shall receive travel expenses and per diem in lieu of subsistence in accordance with sections 5702 and 5703 of title 5, United States Code.

(c) STAFF AND SUPPORT SERVICES.—

(1) STAFF DIRECTOR.—

(A) APPOINTMENT.—The Panel shall appoint a staff director of the Panel.

(B) COMPENSATION.—The staff director shall be paid at a rate not to exceed the rate established for level III of the Executive Schedule.

(2) STAFF.—The Panel shall appoint such additional personnel as the Panel determines to be necessary.

(3) APPLICABILITY OF CIVIL SERVICE LAWS.—The staff director and other members of the staff of the Panel shall be appointed without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service, and shall be paid without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of such title relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

(4) EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS.—With the approval of the Panel, the staff director may procure temporary and intermittent services under section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code.

(d) CONTRACT AUTHORITY.—The Panel may contract with and compensate government and private agencies or persons for items and services, without regard to section 3709 of the Revised Statutes (41 U.S.C. 5).

(e) PHYSICAL FACILITIES.—The Architect of the Capitol, in consultation with the appropriate entities in the legislative branch, shall locate and provide suitable office space for the operation of the Panel on a reimbursable basis. The facilities shall serve as the headquarters of the Panel and shall include all necessary equipment and incidentals required for the proper functioning of the Panel.

(f) DETAIL OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.—Upon the request of the Panel, the head of any Federal agency may detail, on a reimbursable basis, any of the personnel of such agency to the Panel to assist the Panel in carrying out its duties.

(g) **USE OF MAILS.**—The Panel may use the United States mails in the same manner and under the same conditions as Federal agencies and shall, for purposes of the frank, be considered a commission of Congress as described in section 3215 of title 39, United States Code.

(h) **ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES.**—Upon the request of the Panel, the Architect of the Capitol shall provide to the Panel on a reimbursable basis such administrative support services as the Panel may request.

(i) **PRINTING.**—For purposes of costs relating to printing and binding, including the cost of personnel detailed from the Government Printing Office, the Panel shall be deemed to be a committee of the Congress.

SEC. 206. REPORT.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than February 1, 1999, the Panel shall submit to the President, the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Finance of the Senate a report which shall contain a detailed statement of the findings and conclusions of the Panel, including the set of recommendations required under section 202. The report shall include only those recommendations of the Panel that receive the approval of at least 6 members of the Panel, including both Co-Chairs.

(b) **SENSE OF THE CONGRESS.**—It is the sense of the Congress that, pending the report of the Panel under subsection (a), the Federal unified budget surplus should be dedicated to reducing the Federal debt held by the public, increasing the retirement income security of individuals and insuring the solvency of the social security system.

SEC. 207. TERMINATION.

The Panel shall terminate March 31, 1999.

SEC. 208. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated from the Federal Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund such sums as are necessary to carry out the purposes of this title, but not to exceed \$2,000,000.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

The “National Dialogue on Social Security Act of 1998” (H.R. 3546) is designed to advance needed discussion and deliberation in order to pass legislation to restore the long-term solvency of Social Security.

The bill contains two titles. Title I would establish a National Dialogue on Social Security. The purpose of the National Dialogue is to engage the American public, through regional conferences, and national Internet exchanges, in understanding the current program, the problems it faces, and the need to find solutions that will be workable for all generations. Title II would create a bipartisan panel to design a single package of long-range Social Security reforms for restoring the solvency of the Social Security system and maintaining retirement income security.

B. BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

Social Security has assisted several generations of Americans, strengthening families, diminishing poverty and increasing opportunity. Yet unless action is taken, future generations of Americans will inherit a Social Security system so financially troubled that it cannot pay the benefits those taxpayers supported through their working years.

Policy discussions on Social Security reform evoke strong feelings due to Social Security’s significant role in every American’s financial matters. Therefore, the issues regarding long-term reform must be handled in a thoughtful and non-partisan forum. Due to the ex-

treme complexity and sensitivity of long term reform, a group impaneled to bring recommendations to Congress is necessary to ensure the success of enacting comprehensive reform.

C. LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

On April 1, 1998, the Committee on Ways and Means held a hearing on the merits of establishing a bipartisan panel of experts to design long-range Social Security reform and to determine how best to engage the American public in the process. The Committee received the views of current and former Members of Congress, Social Security experts, and various stakeholder organizations.

On April 22, 1998, the full Committee ordered favorably reported, H.R. 3546, the “National Dialogue on Social Security Act of 1998,” by voice vote with a quorum present.

II. EXPLANATION OF PROVISIONS

A. SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE

This act may be cited as the “National Dialogue on Social Security Act of 1998.”

B. TITLE I: NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON SOCIAL SECURITY

1. SECTION 101: ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL DIALOGUE

Present Law

No provision.

Explanation of Provision

A National Dialogue on Social Security would be convened jointly by the President, the Speaker, and the Senate Majority Leader. The purpose of the National Dialogue would be to engage the American public, through regional conferences, and national Internet exchanges, in understanding the current program, the problems it faces, and the need to find solutions that would be workable for all generations.

Reason for Change

The Dialogue is established by the leaders of the Congress and the President who directly impact its design and implementation. The policy changes made to the Social Security system will effect all Americans for decades to come. The Dialogue is designed to reach the broadest audience using the most efficient communication methods. It is the hope that every citizen will therefore have the opportunity to learn and comment constructively on issues regarding Social Security solvency.

Effective Date

Date of enactment

2. SECTION 102: FACILITATORS

Present Law

No provision.

Explanation of Provision

The Dialogue would be coordinated through two Facilitators (one appointed by the President in consultation with the Minority Leaders of the House and Senate, and one appointed jointly by the Speaker and Senate Majority Leader), who would be appointed within 30 days of enactment. The Facilitators would be appointed from individuals known for their integrity, impartiality, and good judgement. By reason of their education, experience, and attainments they would be qualified to perform the duties of Facilitator.

Reason for Change

The Facilitators would be selected by both the Congressional Leadership and the President to assure a bipartisan approach. The Committee views the use of two expert Facilitators as the most expedient way to deploy a coherent and timely strategy for a National Dialogue and move the process forward as timely as possible.

Effective Date

The Facilitators would be appointed within 30 days after the date of enactment.

3. SECTION 103: PLANS FOR NATIONAL DIALOGUE

Present Law

No provision.

Explanation of Provision

After consultation with the President and Congress, final plans for the development and operations of the National Dialogue would be submitted to the President and the Congress no later than 60 days after the date of enactment.

Reason for Change

The President and Congressional Leadership will oversee the strategic planning of the National Dialogue to ensure a bipartisan approach. The plan must be submitted within 60 days to ensure that the Dialogue begins as quickly as possible.

Effective Date

The plan for the National Dialogue must be submitted to the President and the Congress no later than 60 days after the date of enactment.

4. SECTION 104: DIALOGUE COUNCIL

Present Law

No provision.

Explanation of Provision

A Dialogue Council would be established to advise the Facilitators in the development and operations of the National Dialogue. The Dialogue Council would be composed of 36 members, 9 of whom would be appointed by the Speaker, 4 by the Minority

Leader of the House, 9 by the Majority Leader of the Senate, 4 by the Minority Leader of the Senate, and 10 by the President.

Members of the Dialogue Council would include both men and women and would be selected to ensure that 12 members were born before 1946, 12 members were born in or after 1946 and before 1961, and 12 members were born in or after 1961.

Those who are appointed would be selected from a group of 50 individuals—consisting of 2 individuals nominated by each of the following 25 organizations; American Association of Retired Persons, United Seniors Association, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, The National Hispanic Council on Aging, The Older Women’s League, Association of Private Pension and Welfare Plans, Cato Institute, Employee Benefit Research Institute, Americans Discuss Social Security, Third Millennium, The U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce, Americans for Hope, Growth, and Opportunity, National Federation of Independent Businesses, The Concord Coalition, National Caucus and Center on Black Aged, Campaign for America’s Future, The Heritage Foundation, The Brookings Institution, The 2030 Center, National Council of Senior Citizens, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, United States Chamber of Commerce, Pension Rights Center, and Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities.

The Dialogue Council would meet at the call of the Facilitators. Members would receive no pay for their services.

Reason for Change

The Dialogue Council would be created to advise the Facilitators during their strategic planning for the National Dialogue. With representatives from the numerous constituencies and stakeholders in Social Security reform, the individuals nominated by these groups to be appointees to the Council would bring perspectives inclusive of all interested parties and would prevent one group or philosophy from dominating the Council.

Effective Date

Date of enactment

5. SECTION 105: PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Present Law

No provision.

Explanation of Provision

The National Dialogue would operate by means of sponsorship by private, nonpartisan organizations of conferences. These conferences would be convened in localities which are geographically representative of the Nation as a whole, and would provide that participants represent all age groups.

Reason for Change

Private sponsorship would minimize taxpayer cost and potentially give the Council access to the most technologically advanced

communications sources. The source and amounts of contributions made would be made available to the public.

Effective Date

Date of enactment

6. SECTION 106: CONSTITUENCY INPUT

Present Law

No provision.

Explanation of Provision

In order to assure that the widest possible degree of opinion would be received, to the extent practicable and as soon as possible after the date of enactment, each Member of Congress would develop ongoing systems of communications through the use of the Internet and other available electronic capabilities. These systems would be developed with grassroots organizations and other constituency groups within Members' districts. Such groups would include, but not be limited to, key opinion leaders, journalists, business representatives, union members, and students of all age groups.

The Facilitators would appoint an Internet Dialogue Coordinator to assist Members in establishing systems of communication in their districts. The Coordinator would: (1) establish a National Dialogue web site, (2) assist Members' offices in establishing: connections to the National Dialogue web site, moderated chat rooms, and threaded news groups; (3) assist Members in coordinating a national electronic town hall meeting on the future of Social Security; (4) advise Members regarding the most effective technological means for reaching out to constituent groups; and (5) work with other Internet-oriented groups to broaden the reach of Internet capability.

An Internet Advisory Board would be established to advise the Internet Dialogue Coordinator in the most appropriate and effective means of employing the Internet. The Board would consist of three members, appointed by the Facilitators. Board members would receive no pay, but would be reimbursed for travel expenses. The Board would meet at the call of the Internet Dialogue Coordinator.

The Internet Dialogue Coordinator would periodically report to the Facilitators the systems of communications results.

Reason for Change

Effective use of the Internet allowing more people than ever before to communicate with each other offers unprecedented opportunities for real learning and exchange of ideas. In addition, with computers available in libraries and other public forums, individuals who might not otherwise engage in the National Dialogue may be able to do so. Internet use establishes a contact not only with a younger group of Americans but those who find the ease and efficiency of computer use an incentive to become involved in the policy discussion.

Effective Date

Date of enactment

7. SECTION 107: REPORTS

Present Law

No provision.

Explanation of Provision

The National Dialogue Facilitators would summarize their findings and submit them to the Bipartisan Panel to Design Long-Range Social Security Reform on an ongoing basis, based on information generated by participants in conferences conducted and constituent input received from Members' offices.

Reason for Change

The Committee intends that the Bipartisan Panel, to the degree possible, receive and consider the information and data obtained through the National Dialogue.

Effective Date

Date of enactment.

8. SECTION 108: TERMINATION

Present Law

No provision.

Explanation of Provision

The Dialogue would terminate January 1, 1999.

Reason for Change

To be a complimentary tool for the Bipartisan Panel's recommendations, a time limit is established prior to the Panel's final report so that research and other information from the Council is made available in a timely manner to the Panel for their consideration.

Effective Date

Date of enactment.

9. SECTION 109: AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATION

Present Law

No provision.

Explanation of Provision

Such sums as may be necessary would be authorized to be appropriated for the compensation of the Facilitators and the activities related to the Internet Dialogue.

Reason for Change

The funding authorized is necessary to compensate the Facilitators and to provide for the Internet Dialogue activities in order that it can move as quickly and expeditiously as possible.

Effective Date

Date of enactment.

C. TITLE II: BIPARTISAN PANEL TO DESIGN LONG-RANGE SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM

1. SECTION 201: ESTABLISHMENT OF PANEL

Present Law

No provision.

Explanation of Provision

Establish a panel to be known as the Bipartisan Panel to Design Long-Range Social Security Reform (in this title referred to as the “Panel”).

Reason for Change

The Panel is created to design a single set of recommendations to ensure the future solvency of Social Security. This will enable the Congress to quickly consider long-term policy in a non-partisan manner and increase the likelihood that urgently needed reform will be enacted in the next legislative session.

Effective Date

Date of enactment.

2. SECTION 202: DUTIES OF PANEL

Present Law

No provision.

Explanation of Provision

It would be the duty of the Panel to design a single package of long-range Social Security reforms for restoring the solvency of the Social Security system and maintaining retirement income security.

Reason for Change

The Panel is tasked to agree upon a single package of reforms so as to present to Congress with a viable policy devoid of one dominate political party or ideology.

Effective Date

Date of enactment.

3. SECTION 203: MEMBERSHIP OF THE PANEL

Present Law

No provision.

Explanation of Provision

The Panel would be composed of eight members; with four appointed jointly by the Speaker of the House and the Majority Leader of the Senate, two appointed by the President, two appointed jointly by the Minority Leader of the Senate and the Minority

Leader of the House. These officials would designate two members of the Panel to serve as Co-Chairs.

The members of the Panel would consist of individuals of recognized standing and distinction, who can represent the multiple generations with a stake in the viability of the system, and who possess a demonstrated capacity to discharge the duties imposed on the Panel. At least one of the members would be appointed from individuals representing the interests of employees, and at least one of the members would be appointed from individuals representing the interests of employers.

It would be the role of the Co-Chairs to provide leadership to the Panel and to determine the duties of and oversee the Panel staff.

A vacancy in the Panel would not affect its powers, but would be filled in the same manner as the original members of the Panel.

Reason for Change

The Panel is designed to be small, bipartisan, and to represent the interests of the multiple generations who have a stake in the future of Social Security. The composition of the Panel is designed to allow an efficient yet balanced consideration of views, policies and recommendations.

Effective Date

Date of enactment.

4. SECTION 204: PROCEDURES

Present Law

No provision.

Explanation of Provision

The Panel would meet at the call of its Co-Chairs or a majority of its members. A majority of the members would constitute a quorum, but a lesser number may conduct hearings. The Panel may hold hearings and undertake other activities as necessary to carry out their duties. Meetings held by the Panel would be conducted in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

The Commissioner of Social Security and head of any other Federal agency would make such data and information necessary to the Panel available to enable it to carry out its duties.

Reason for Change

The Panel's administrative procedures are designed to facilitate their holding of hearings and obtaining data necessary for their deliberations.

Effective Date

Date of enactment.

5. SECTION 205: ADMINISTRATION

Present Law

No provision.

Explanation of Provision

Members of the Panel would serve without compensation, except that members of the Panel who are private citizens of the United States would be reimbursed for travel, subsistence, and other necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as members of the Panel.

The Panel would, without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, relating to the competitive service, appoint a Staff Director who would be paid at a rate not to exceed the rate established for level III of the Executive Schedule.

In addition to the Staff Director, the Panel would appoint such additional personnel as the Panel determines to be necessary and may compensate such additional personnel without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, relating to competitive service.

The Panel would incur other additional expenses, including, if necessary, contractual expenses as may be necessary to carry out its duties.

The Architect of the Capitol, in consultation with the appropriate entities in the legislative branch, would locate and provide suitable office space, necessary equipment, and such administrative support services as the Panel may request on a reimbursable basis. Upon request of the Panel, Federal agencies may detail personnel to assist the Panel. The Panel may use the U.S. mails in the same manner as Federal agencies.

Reason for Change

The statute provides for standard administrative procedures for both public and private members of the Panel and staff operating as government employees utilizing public resources. The Architect of the Capitol is given the responsibility of providing office space and thereby ensuring that Members will have access to the Panel's offices.

Effective Date

Date of enactment.

6. SECTION 206: REPORT

Present Law

No provision.

Explanation of Provision

The Panel would make its report to the President, the Senate Committee on Finance and the House Committee on Ways and Means no later than February 1, 1999. The report would include only those recommendations that receive the approval of at least six members of the Panel, including both Co-Chairs. It would be the sense of the Congress that, pending the report of the Panel, the Federal unified budget surplus should be dedicated to reducing the Federal debt held by the public, increasing the retirement income security of individuals and insuring the solvency of the Social Security system.

Reason for Change

The Panel is to report soon after the organization of the 106th Congress so that debate on the issue of Social Security reform can begin immediately and coincide with any recommendations or budget submissions from the President regarding Social Security.

It would be the Sense of the Congress that until the report of the Panel is made the budget surplus should be dedicated to reducing Federal debt, increasing the retirement income security of individuals and insuring the solvency of the Social Security system.

Effective Date

Date of enactment

7. SECTION 207: TERMINATION

Present Law

No provision.

Explanation of Provision

The Panel would terminate March 31, 1999.

Reason for Change

After the Panel reports its recommendations, a brief period is provided before the Panel's termination so that members of the Panel are available in their official capacity to brief other Congressional groups or testify in any hearings on the subject of long-term reform.

Effective Date

Date of enactment

8. SECTION 208: AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

Present Law

No provision.

Explanation of Provision

Funds, not to exceed \$2 million, would be authorized to be appropriated from the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund to carry out the purposes of this title.

Reason for Change

The funding is consistent with current Social Security law that provides for all administrative costs to be borne by the Social Security Trust Funds.

Effective Date

Date of enactment

III. VOTE OF THE COMMITTEE

In compliance with clause 2(1)(2)(B) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statement is made:

The bill, H.R. 3546 was ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives April 22, 1998 by voice vote, with a quorum present.

IV. BUDGET EFFECTS OF THE BILL

A. COMMITTEE ESTIMATE OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS

In compliance with clause 7(a) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statement is made:

The Committee agrees with the estimate prepared by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) which is included below.

B. STATEMENT REGARDING NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY AND TAX EXPENDITURES

In compliance with clause 2(1)(3)(B) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee states the Committee bill results in no change in budget authority for direct spending programs relative to current law, and no new or increased tax expenditures.

C. COST ESTIMATE PREPARED BY THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE

In compliance with clause 2(1)(3)(C) of rule XI of the House of Representatives requiring a cost estimate prepared by the Congressional Budget Office, the following report prepared by CBO is provided:

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, April 23, 1998.

Hon. BILL ARCHER,
*Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 3546, the National Dialogue on Social Security Act of 1998.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Kathy Ruffing.

Sincerely,

JUNE E. O'NEILL, *Director.*

Enclosure.

H.R. 3546—National Dialogue on Social Security Act of 1998

Summary: H.R. 3546 would set up an eight-member panel to make recommendations by February 1999 on possible reforms to the Social Security program. The panel would draw on opinions solicited through regional conferences and through the Internet, in an exercise labeled the "National Dialogue."

H.R. 3546 would authorize the appropriation of an estimated \$2 million for these activities. It would also permit the dialogue to finance its activities partly through voluntary donations. Therefore, the bill could affect direct spending and receipts, and pay-as-you-

go procedures would apply. CBO estimates that any pay-as-you-go impact would be insignificant.

H.R. 3546 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (UMRA).

Estimated cost to the Federal Government: The estimated budgetary impact of H.R. 3546 is shown in the following table.

The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 650 (Social Security). The small cost (estimated at less than \$500,000) of the National Dialogue would be appropriated from the general fund of the Treasury and would be on-budget; the \$2 million cost of the Bipartisan Panel would be charged to the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund, which is off-budget.

		By fiscal years, in millions of dollars—					
		1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
AUTHORIZATIONS OF APPROPRIATIONS							
National Dialogue:							
Estimated Authorization Level		0	(¹)	0	0	0	0
Estimated Outlays		0	(¹)	0	0	0	0
Bipartisan Panel:							
Estimated Authorization Level		0	2	0	0	0	0
Estimated Outlays		0	2	0	0	0	0
DIRECT SPENDING							
National Dialogue:							
Estimated Budget Authority		0	(¹)	0	0	0	0
Estimated Outlays		0	(¹)	0	0	0	0
REVENUES							
National Dialogue:							
Estimated Revenues		0	(¹)	0	0	0	0

¹ Less than \$500,000.

Basis of Estimate: CBO's estimate assumes that the bill would be enacted in September 1998.

H.R. 3546 would establish a National Dialogue on Social Security. That dialogue would use the services of two facilitators appointed by the Congress and the President, 36 members of a Dialogue Council to be nominated by private organizations, an Internet Dialogue Coordinator, and an Internet Advisory Board. Citizens' opinions would be solicited in regional conferences and through the Internet. Only the two facilitators and the Internet Dialogue Coordinator would be paid; private contributions to cover other costs would be encouraged. Any such contributions would be considered governmental receipts. The comments and suggestions received would be summarized for use by the Bipartisan Panel by January 1999. H.R. 3546 would authorize the appropriation of such sums as shall be necessary for the dialogue; because the dialogue would use only a few paid staff and would finish its work in a short time, CBO estimates that appropriation would total less than \$500,000.

The Bipartisan Panel to Design Long-Range Social Security Reform would consist of eight members, appointed by the Majority and Minority Leaders in the Congress and by the President. The panel would report its recommendations by February 1, 1999. It would be authorized (subject to future appropriation) to spend up to \$2 million on professional staff and other expenses.

Pay-as-you-go-considerations: The Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 establishes pay-as-you-go procedures for legislation affecting direct spending or receipts. Because the National Dialogue on Social Security would be encouraged to cover some costs from private donations, the bill could affect direct spending and receipts. CBO judges, however, that those effects would be negligible.

Estimated impact on State, local, and tribal governments: H.R. 3546 contains no intergovernmental mandates as defined in UMRA and would have no impact on the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

Estimated impact on the private sector: H.R. 3546 contains no private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA.

Estimated prepared by: Federal Cost: Kathy Ruffing; Impact on State, Local, and Tribal Governments: Leo Lex; and Impact on the Private Sector: Ralph Smith.

Estimate approved by: Robert A. Sunshine; Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

V. OTHER MATTERS REQUIRED TO BE DISCUSSED UNDER THE RULES OF THE HOUSE

A. COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In compliance with clause 2(l)(3)(A) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee reports that the need for this legislation was confirmed through its ongoing oversight of the Social Security Administration and the Social Security programs.

B. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT REFORM AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

In compliance with clause 2(l)(3)(D) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee states that no oversight findings and recommendations have been submitted to this Committee by the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight with respect to the provisions contained in this bill.

C. CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

With respect to clause 2(l)(4) of the rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, relating to Constitutional Authority, the Committee states that the Committee's action in reporting the bill is derived from Article I of the Constitution, Section 8 ("The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and to provide for * * * the general welfare of the United States * * *").

VI. APPLICABILITY OF FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT

Pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C., App., section 5(b)), the Committee states that any advisory bodies created by the bill, such as the Dialogue Council, Internet Advisory Board, and Bipartisan Panel to Design Long-Range Social Security Reform are consciously created, and are deemed appropriate and necessary to carry out the purposes of the bill. It is the view of the

Committee that the functions of any such advisory bodies are not being and could be performed by one or more agencies or by an advisory committee already in existence, or by enlarging the mandate of an existing advisory committee.

