

want to be safe, they want their families economically secure, they want them healthy. I am here today to argue on behalf of two of these bills that will do that in terms of having a more balanced transportation system.

One, House Resolution 37, would give congressional employees here in the District of Columbia and in our district offices the opportunity to contribute to the livability of their communities by using transit. As local elected officials we have had the opportunity of implementing such programs in our community, and we found that transit passes made a great deal of difference. They improved morale of our employees, they decreased the demand for parking, they helped clean the air, they decreased congestion, and they actually ended up saving our employees money.

Sadly, the House of Representatives is behind the curve in offering transit benefits. Since 1984, private sector employers have offered their employees transit benefits for their commute to work. Even our colleagues in the U.S. Senate have successfully operated a transit pass program since 1992. Today over 2,000 employees of the Congressional Budget Office, the Architect of the Capitol, and the Senate participate in an employer-sponsored transit pass program. With the passage of the Federal Employees Clean Air Incentives Act of 1993, the House is authorized to offer its employees the same incentive.

Unfortunately, we have yet to do so. This is a bipartisan resolution, already with over 3 dozen cosponsors, that would give House offices the option to underwrite part of the cost of monthly passes for our employees. No additional revenue is needed to approve the program, since our employee transit passes would be funded out of existing transit office budgets.

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, WMATA, is extremely supportive of this legislation, and is ready to help the House implement the transit benefit program here in the D.C. metro area as soon as we are willing to work with them.

Additionally, we are hearing from our transit friends about another important piece of legislation. This is the Commuter Choice Act, H.R. 873, that is primarily sponsored by our colleague, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. LEWIS].

Most of us understand that the overwhelming reliance on single-occupant vehicles is responsible for unsafe air, unsafe streets, and gridlock that is increasingly paralyzing our communities. Yet, sadly, our tax policy encourages commuting by car over any other means of transportation. It is not enough that in America we spend more advertising the automobile than supporting transit. We have a tax system that discriminates against people who would like to do the right thing and not use their private automobile.

Employers can currently provide free parking up to \$170 a month tax-free, but a transit pass or car pool benefits

are allowed for only one-third of that value. The Commuter Choice Act would eliminate this imbalance, and encourage energy savings without penalizing drivers.

It would increase the nontaxable transit pass benefit to the same \$170 per month as the tax-free parking benefit.

□ 1800

In addition, this bill will take away the disincentive for people who choose alternative transportation modes. Right now, if an employer decides that they are going to give \$25 a month as an incentive for people to walk, run, or bike to work, that will make the other benefits that they provide potentially taxable, including tax-free parking.

This bill would provide the opportunity for a stipend of \$15 to \$50 per month. This cash benefit would support employees who choose to walk, bike, run, rollerblade to work. We have had opportunities in the State of California, where this has been implemented by some employers.

I urge my colleagues to support these two bills.

SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore [Mr. STEARNS]. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I am a member of the Committee on the Budget. Last week Alan Greenspan, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, came before our committee. Today Secretary Rubin, Secretary of the Treasury, came before our committee. They made, I think, a very important point that everybody should be aware of. That is that Social Security has very serious problems for the future.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to talk about some of the things that are happening in Social Security that means that the benefits for existing retirees are threatened as well as the potential for retirement benefits for workers that are going to retire in the future.

In terms of the Federal budget, Social Security uses up now 22 percent of the total Federal budget. What is happening is we have a system in Social Security where existing workers pay their taxes in to support the retirement benefits of existing retirees, a pay as you GOPAC.

That is the way it is today. That is the way it always has been since Social Security started in 1935. What is happening is there is a fewer number of workers. The birth rate is going down, so we are seeing a fewer number of workers paying in their taxes to support an increasing number of retirees. For example, in 1945, there were 42 people working paying in their taxes to support the benefits of each retiree. By 1950, that went down to 17 individuals working paying in their taxes to support each retiree. Today there are

three people working, paying in their taxes to support each retiree.

What has happened at the same time is an increasing number of retirees. The life span is much longer. When we started Social Security, the average age of death was 61, even though the retirement age was 65. And today the average age of death is almost 74 years. If you are fortunate enough to live to be 65 years old, then the average age of death is 84 years old. So a tremendous increase in the number of retirees which is going to be compounded by the fact that the baby boomers, that huge population growth after World War II, are going to start to retire in about 2011.

So everybody is guessing we are going to run out of money, there is not enough money coming in to pay the outgo after 2011. Dorcas Hardy, a former Social Security Commissioner, estimates that we are going to run out of money as early as 2005.

Let me give you an example of the increased cost of Social Security. This year on average we are paying out for Social Security benefits \$700,000 a minute. By 2029, we will be paying out \$5,600,000 a minute. Today \$700,000, by 2029 it is going to be \$5,600,000. A tremendous increase in cost.

How do we solve the problem? I have introduced a bill last session that makes 12 modest changes for future retirees, that holds safe existing retirees, but it slightly slows down the increase in benefits for higher income retirees. It adds an additional year that you are going to have to work to be eligible for retirement. It has some changes in the bend points. It makes changes in the requirements of a spouse receiving Social Security benefits that did not work, but the point is how do we make the changes. How are we going to come to grips with changes in a program that has been called the third rail, that if politicians start touching this like they did Medicare, they are going to be chastised in the next election.

I urge my colleagues to come forward. Let us start taking our heads out of the sand.

Mr. President, I ask you, Secretary Rubin, I ask you, colleagues, I ask you, let us start dealing with this program. If we delay the solutions of solving Social Security, that simply means that the solutions are going to be much more drastic. It is important that we start today working on these solutions for Social Security.

I invite my colleagues to examine my bill. Let us run this idea up the flag pole. Let us come up with better solutions, but let us not put this decision off by simply appointing a commission that is going to come back 2 or 3 or 4 years later with three different proposals on how to solve it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Wisconsin [Mr. KIND] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. KIND addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

ROSE-HULMAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. PEASE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PEASE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology at Terre Haute, IN. Rose-Hulman recently received the 1997 Theodore Hesburgh Award from the American Council on Education, which honors exceptional faculty development programs designed to enhance undergraduate teaching and learning. Additionally, the institute received a certificate of excellence for its development of faculty interdisciplinary teams who recited the integrated, first-year curriculum in science, engineering, and mathematics. This innovative program has a national impact on undergraduate engineering education and will likely affect many other levels of learning in the engineering field as well.

The State of Indiana is proud to be home to such an extraordinary educational facility. Rose-Hulman has a reputation for excellence, as evidenced by the fact that 90 percent of its freshmen return, 75 percent of them graduate, and 30 percent go on to graduate school. Its admission standards have resulted in the average SAT scores of Rose-Hulman students being the highest of any college or university in the State of Indiana; 90 percent of its freshmen place in the top 10 percent of their high school graduating classes.

The student-to-faculty ratio is 12 to 1, which is further evidence of the exceptional standards and focus on teaching and learning in this institution; 95 percent of the remarkable faculty at Rose-Hulman hold the Ph.D. degree.

These and other factors have placed Rose-Hulman among our Nation's finest educational institutions, a model for the Nation and the world in teaching, research, and service, and a deserving recipient of the 1997 Theodore Hesburgh Award from the American Council on Education.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we have had a very active weekend and likewise very active several weeks. The whole issue has been around the horrors and hysteria of campaign finance reform or campaign finance offense. Let me first acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, that Members of the U.S. Congress, from my perspective, come here to work and work on behalf of their constituents. They hold near and dear the Constitution of the United

States. They appreciate that average people can run for office and represent Americans in this august and important body. They recognize that it is not their job to come here and be led by those who are filled with special interests and who pay for those special interests to be brought to the floor of the House. But they do recognize that average citizens like you and me fund different PAC's and give opportunity for their voices to be heard.

I think it is important that we recognize what democracy is. It means that teachers can gather and organize and speak about issues of education. It means that nurses can organize and talk about health issues. Senior citizens are able as well to comment on Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid. It means that everyone's voice can be heard.

Campaign finance is an equal opportunity offender. I believe in campaign finance reform. I do not believe in campaign finance hysteria.

I am very glad, as we have studied the polls, that the American people are likewise. They want to see things that are wrong corrected, but they do understand that this hysteria gets to be a little political sometimes. We need to all look at ways to improve how moneys are funded, how the message is gotten out, how the media is utilized. And I would almost say that there needs to be some ordering of how media, the electronic media, the print media is utilized so the voting public can understand who the candidates are and that the average man and woman and young person will have the opportunity to run for public office and in particular a position in the U.S. Senate or the U.S. House of Representatives.

That is what the Founding Fathers, and I hate to say there were no founding mothers, intended. They wanted the average layman, the farmer, they wanted the printer, they wanted the local philosopher to have the opportunity to be in the United States Congress. That is what I believe is right.

Is there something to having guests at the White House? Well, I might add that many of our early Presidents simply opened the doors and said, bring them off of the streets and let them stay here. It is the people's house. And if there needs to be some corrections made on how it is utilized, so be it. But do not deny the first family the opportunity to entertain their guests or maybe to say, come on in, my neighbor and my friend, to visit.

I do support campaign finance reform. But I think we are wrong to be engaged in hysteria. I think we are wrong to suggest that individuals who come here are bought and paid for. I think we are wrong to take a litmus test and not really to get to understand the 435 persons in this House and the 100 persons in the Senate and, yes, the President of the United States who comes here truly committed to doing what is right for the citizens of the United States of America.

There is some talk about a special prosecutor. I am absolutely opposed and I will tell you why. Special prosecutor connotes that someone has purposely done something illegal that may be on the verge of criminal activities. We have a body that is now set and the moneys have been voted for the U.S. Senate to begin investigating any activities that may have occurred that may be illegal or may infringe upon our rules with respect to campaign finance reform.

I say let the process go forward. Let the witnesses be subpoenaed. Let the Members who have something to say say it. Let the investigation be thorough. Let it be of Republicans. Let it be of Independents. Let it be of Democrats. Let the American people see it in the clearness of the day and let us have your input as to how best to get the message out so that we who are average citizens who come to this body can best run and not be controlled by dollars but still have the opportunity, each of us, whatever our backgrounds, to come to this body and to be able to serve you in the way that we should.

The American people have never given in to hysteria. That is why we have a body of government that has lasted almost 400 years. I ask that we not give in to hysteria, that we not allow the media frenzy and the siege upon this Government to take over from what we should be doing: dealing with NATO enlargement, national security, dealing with the drug drudgery that is plaguing our society and young people, dealing with children's health, Medicare and Medicaid, the budget.

Campaign finance reform, let us do it with reason and fairness. Let us do it with equality and opportunity for all.

ON CUBA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow marks the first anniversary of the signing into law of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, better known as the Helms-Burton law.

This historic legislation set a precedent for the protection of the property rights of all Americans. It tells foreign investors that if they traffick in illegally confiscated American property in Cuba, they will be subject to lawsuits in American courts and may be denied entry into our country.

As a secondary goal, the law targets the reduction of foreign investments in Cuba which the Castro regime has been using to reinforce its totalitarian state since the downfall of the Soviet Union and the end of Soviet subsidies.

□ 1815

On both respects, Mr. Speaker, in protecting American property rights and in reducing the hard currency obtained by the Castro dictatorship, the