

that appeal to the greatest positive attributes of our humanity. My friends no better time exists to lift up a new standard of peace and goodwill in this world. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, if at the beginning of every year, all of America, and indeed all of the world proclaim aloud and at once, in unison and strength, that these are our goals: brotherhood, charity, understanding, and peace. Such a declaration has never before been made, but it can. I urge support of H. Con. Res. 363 and support its overwhelming passage.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE SEAFOOD SAFETY AND MERCURY SCREENING ACT OF 2000

**HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 19, 2000*

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, earlier this year the Mercury Policy Project and the California Communities Against Toxics found the Food and Drug Administration was not testing enough seafood for toxic mercury. Their findings were published in a report that was also cosponsored by the Sierra Club and Clean Water Action. In addition to contending the FDA's recommended level for methyl mercury exposure was inadequate, the report noted that the FDA does not check any domestic tuna, shark or swordfish for toxic mercury even though they tend to have the highest levels of the toxin.

The lack of a system to screen seafood for mercury is a serious gap in the nation's food safety system. Individuals who consume too much mercury can suffer serious health problems. That is why today I am introducing the Seafood Safety and Mercury Screening Act of 2000. This legislation will require the FDA to develop a system for testing seafood for methyl mercury. It will also require the FDA to develop a statutory threshold level for methyl mercury content in seafood and consider the findings of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), which published a report on mercury exposure in July, when developing that threshold. The NAS report found that the Environmental Protection Agency's recommended level for methyl mercury exposure, which is stronger than the FDA's, is the more appropriate standard.

We know that if people ingest too much mercury they will get sick and we know exactly where to look for it. Domestic tuna, shark, and swordfish have very high levels of toxic mercury. If we have the means to detect this poison and know exactly where it comes from, common sense suggests that we take the time to look for it and take the necessary steps to inform the public. Typically we do not know about the source of an outbreak of food poisoning until the FDA or other government agencies works backwards to find its origin after people have already gotten sick. When it comes to mercury, we have the opportunity to be proactive and prevent illness instead of being reactive after its too late.

The establishment of a strong, enforceable standard that prohibits seafood that contains mercury above the recommended level from reaching the consumer will stop episodes of food poisoning before they have a chance to occur. Another important component of pro-

tecting the public from the contaminated seafood is by providing citizens with the information they need to make informed decisions about what they are eating. To that end, the Seafood Safety and Mercury Screening Act of 2000 will also establish a nation wide education program to educate consumers about the dangers of mercury contamination, with a particular emphasis on protecting the most vulnerable populations, pregnant women and children.

I urge all of my colleagues to join me in the effort to strengthen our nation's food safety system by lending their full support to the Seafood Safety and Mercury Screening Act of 2000.

**A BUSY MAN: REVEREND DR. WILLIE A. SIMMONS**

**HON. DONALD M. PAYNE**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 19, 2000*

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, August 31, 2000 marked the retirement of Rev. Dr. Willie A. Simmons. Rev. Simmons is known for his leadership in the community and social services.

Rev. Dr. Simmons was ordained in 1960 in Birmingham, AL. He received his Doctor of Divinity degree in 1992 and his Doctor of Letter in 1997. He has served as Assistant Pastor of the First Corinthian Baptist Church of Newark, NJ, for over 20 years.

While he served the spiritual needs of his community, he also served the physical needs of his fellow man. He has served the Essex County Division of Welfare as a Family Service Social Worker for more than 28 years.

Mr. Speaker, when we hear the adage, "When you want something done, ask a busy person," people like Rev. Simmons come to mind. Throughout his years he is a former Executive Vice President of the Communication Workers of America Local 1081 which represents all case workers, clerks and investigators of the Essex County division of Welfare. Rev. Simmons is the District Director of Frontiers International, 1st District, which gives him responsibility over all New England states; and a member of the National Board of Directors. In addition, he is a past Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Frontiers International Foundation. He is a Chairman of the Political Action and Homeless Committees of the Newark-North Jersey Committee of Black Churchmen and an Executive Board member. He is a member of the Baptist Ministries Conference of Newark and the Vicinity. He also serves as Treasurer and Chairman of the Budget & Finance Committee of Essex-Newark Legal Services. He is a Co-Chairman of the Black and Latino Coalition, Inc. Rev. Simmons presently serves as President of the United Community Corporation Board of Directors, having been elected and serving as president three (3) times in the past. He is also affiliated with more than 15 other organizations.

Rev. Dr. Simmons has received more than 100 awards in recognition of his support, participation, achievements and accomplishments in various community and social services.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure my colleagues would have joined me as I congratulated him.

#### HONORING YALE UNIVERSITY ON THEIR 300TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 19, 2000*

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to pay tribute to one of the finest institutions for higher education in our nation. It is an honor and privilege to join with the New Haven Colony Historical Society in congratulating Yale University on its 300th anniversary.

On October 24, faculty, students, alumni and community members will gather as Yale University is honored with the 2000 Seal of the City Award. For the past eight years, the New Haven Colony Historical Society has bestowed this honor on an individual or institution whose activities or ideas have significantly added to the quality of life, the prosperity, or the general improvement of greater New Haven. For three centuries, Yale University has been a cornerstone of support for the New Haven community and has made significant contributions in all of these areas.

Nearly three centuries ago, a group of Congregational ministers created a "Collegiate School" where youths could be instructed in the arts and sciences and prepared for public service in both the Church and the Civil State. That commitment has been reflected in Yale's mission and role as an educator of leaders and a center for scholarship and research. Over the past several years, Yale University has played an instrumental role in the city of New Haven's efforts to revitalize Greater New Haven. Yale has forged a strong relationship with the city of New Haven, working with city administrators to ensure that the needs of our children and families are given every opportunity to build strong communities of which we can all be proud.

Yale University has had a profound impact on our community and our nation, not only as a leading academic institution, but as a center for public policy, the arts and sciences, and medicine. Since its inception in 1701, Yale has been home to some of our country's most infamous characters who have helped to shape the course of our society and our nation. Yale's alumni have been government leaders—Presidents Taft, Ford, Bush, and Clinton; they have made major advances in medicine and science—Eli Whitney, Samuel Morse, Dr. Benjamin Spock, Murray Gell-Mann; and they have contributed to the arts—Sinclair Lewis, Charles Ives, Cole Porter, Paul Newman, and Meryl Streep. Over the last three hundred years, Yale University has educated many of our most invigorating leaders and inspiring figureheads, bringing our nation ever forward into the future.

As we look ahead into the new millennium, we can be assured that Yale University, its administrators, faculty, and alumni will be there to help greater New Haven and our country continue to grow and flourish. It is an honor for me to stand today to congratulate Yale on its tercentennial and to extend my deepest thanks and appreciation for their innumerable efforts on behalf of our community.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. XAVIER BECERRA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 19, 2000*

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, on October 18, 2000, I was unavoidably detained and therefore unable to cast my vote on rollcall No. 531, H.J. Res. 631, on Agreeing to the Resolution Honoring the Members of the Crew of the Guided Missile Destroyer U.S.S. *Cole* Who Were Killed or Wounded in the Terrorist Attack on that Vessel in Aden, Yemen, on October 12, 2000. Had I been present for the vote, I would have voted "yea."

Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in honoring the members of the crew of the U.S.S. *Cole* who died on October 12th as a result of a cowardly act of terrorism, and I send my heartfelt condolences to their families, friends, and loved ones. I also rise to honor those serving on the U.S.S. *Cole* who were wounded in the attack, and wish them a speedy recovery. Finally, I salute those members of the crew who fought valiantly to save their ship and rescue their wounded shipmates. Indeed, I wish to express my deep gratitude to all of the men and women of our Armed Forces who routinely put their lives on the line.

**ACTION TO PROMOTE GREATER  
RETIREMENT SECURITY SHOULD  
BE A PRIORITY**

**HON. MARK UDALL**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 19, 2000*

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, we are nearing the end of this 106th Congress—but we have not finished all the work that needs to be done. When the new Congress meets next year, it will find a long list of unfinished business. An important thing on that list will be action to support and improve the ability of all Americans to look forward to fiscal security in their years of retirement. I want to take this opportunity to outline my thinking about the steps that Congress should take toward that goal, in several areas.

## SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Security is our most important and most successful program dealing with retirement security. Today its guaranteed benefits provide the primary source of income for 66 percent of Americans over age 65, and are especially important for the 42 percent of the elderly for whom Social Security is all that keeps them above the poverty line. It is also an important compact between generations and across divisions based on income levels.

I strongly support maintaining adequate and appropriate guaranteed defined benefits for current Social Security recipients, and for people who will retire in the future—but that does not mean that I oppose any changes in Social Security.

Earlier this year, I supported the successful effort to remove the earnings limit that could reduce Social Security payments to people retiring at age 65. And there are some other additional steps to revise Social Security that we should take right away. For example, we should limit the so-called "windfall elimination"

offset so that it will not apply to individuals whose combined monthly income is under \$2,000. And we should again allow blind individuals to earn up to the social security excess earnings threshold without losing benefits.

Further, as we look ahead, we must recognize that Social Security faces future demographic problems because retirement of the "baby boom" generation will greatly increase the number of beneficiaries in comparison with the number of people paying into the system.

Congress will have to address this problem, and should do so sooner rather than later—but, obviously, that will take time. In the meantime, our first priority should be to avoid making the problem harder. That means—Social Security's current surplus revenues should not be spent for any other purpose. That way, the Treasury Department will use these revenues to reduce the publicly-held debt. By paying down the debt, we will reduce the amount of interest the government otherwise would have to pay, freeing valuable resources and increasing our options to bolster Social Security for the future.

Congress also must avoid excessive and ill-targeted tax cuts that would endanger our ability to protect Social Security and Medicare and strengthen them for the future.

## SAVING FOR RETIREMENT

Social Security is indispensable, but people will be better off if they can also have other sources of retirement income. So, we should make it easier for them to save and invest and accumulate assets. Previous action has led the way in several areas, and we can build on those foundations in some important ways, including—Increasing the amount that individuals can put into Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) and benefit from favorable treatment under the tax laws.

Enabling people to make additional contributions to 401(k) or similar retirement accounts, and making it easier to take full advantage of such retirement plans.

Making it easier for people to maintain their retirement accounts when they change jobs.

Making it more feasible for employers—especially small businesses—to establish and maintain retirement plans for their employees.

## OTHER PROPOSALS

As we all know, both Vice President GORE and Governor George W. Bush, have proposed additional new initiatives. Under each, the federal government would assist people to set up, maintain, and benefit from individual investment accounts. But there is a big difference.

Under Governor Bush's plan, the federal assistance would come from allowing people to decide to divert part of their Social Security taxes into these accounts. In contrast, under the Vice President's plan general federal revenues—not Social Security revenues—would be used to add to the money people choose to put into tax-free individual savings accounts.

I am concerned about the effects of the Bush proposal on Social Security. Diverting revenues out of Social Security now will make it harder to maintain adequate guaranteed benefits in the future. And that effect is compounded because the diverted amounts cannot be used to pay down the debt, so it will be necessary to pay hundreds of billions of dollars in additional interest.

Those who support privatizing a portion of Social Security (the plan proposed by Gov-

ernor Bush and by my Republican opponent, Ms. Carolyn Cox) claim that differences in benefits will be made up from the higher returns that can be earned by investing a portion of individual account balances in stocks and equities. But many economic forecasters have suggested that for this claim to be true, stock returns for the next 75 years will have to equal those of the last 75 years—a rate that seems unlikely to be sustained. It seems to me that to rely on that scenario would require a dramatic leap in faith that our national economic growth will continue the record pace of the last decade.

Moreover, the costs of administering individual retirement accounts have to be taken into account, and even conservative estimates suggest that these costs would be high enough to cut accumulations in individual retirement accounts by 20 percent over a worker's lifetime.

Diverting funds away from the Social Security Trust Fund strikes me as an unnecessary and potentially dangerous step in "reforming" Social Security. It has an element of risk in some ways similar to those involved in having the government invest the Trust Fund directly in the securities markets—which was one of the reasons I declined to support President Clinton's earlier proposal for such investments, even though the President at least tried to address the questions of stock market volatility.

In short, both the Bush plan and a similar one supported by my opponent, Ms. Cox, strike me as not the right way to proceed as we work for the long-term stability of Social Security.

I also have some questions about the Vice President's plan, but the fact it would not mean that kind of diversion—it is "Social Security plus," not "Social Security minus"—means that it would not start out by making it harder to assure that Social Security will continue to remain as the indispensable safety net for future retirees.

**MACON IRON AND PAPER STOCK,  
INC.**

**HON. SAXBY CHAMBLISS**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, October 19, 2000*

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Macon Iron and Paper Stock, Inc. today for their recent recognition by the Department of Labor. Macon Iron recently won the prestigious Director's Award for Safety at the annual Georgia Department of Labor's Health Safety and Environmental Conference.

State Labor Commissioner Michael Thurmond bestowed this award upon Macon Iron at the seventh annual meeting in Atlanta along with its sister companies General Steel, Industrial Alloy Supply, and Commercial Doors and Accessories.

This award is presented to companies for criteria involving safety performance, contributions to the community, the sharing of safety information, and civic responsibility. Macon Iron was chosen from almost 100 companies in the state of Georgia who participate in the labor department's safety awards program, and was selected for their exceptional safety programs.

I congratulate the employees of Macon Iron and its sister companies for their hard work