

month, the surviving spouse or family members must send back the Social Security check for that month.

This is an unfair and heartless rule.

When a loved one dies, there are expenses that the family must take care of:

There are final bills to pay. There are utility bills that need to be paid. There is rent or a mortgage that must be taken care of, and oftentimes, there are final health expenses.

Companies will not cancel these bills for that final month of life. These expenses must still be paid. So why is Social Security telling the family that the final month of Social Security income must be returned? This money is needed for these expenses.

My bill corrects this unfair rule in a simple and straightforward way:

It says that if you die after the 15th of the month, your surviving spouse or the family estate will get the Social Security check for that full month.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me and support the Social Security Benefits Protection Act.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE DEPOSIT INSURANCE FUNDS MERGER ACT OF 2000

**HON. JOHN J. LaFALCE**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 9, 2000*

Mr. LaFALCE. Mr. Speaker, today I join my colleagues, the Chair of the Financial Institutions Subcommittee of the Banking Committee, MARGE ROUKEMA, in introducing the Deposit Insurance Funds Merger Act of 2000. I would like to thank Congresswoman ROUKEMA for her leadership in putting forward this timely legislation.

I believe the merger of the Bank Insurance Fund (BIF) and Savings Association Insurance Fund (SAIF) is a matter of substantial public policy importance that should be addressed on its independent merits. A merger of the BIF and SAIF would clearly benefit the deposit insurance system by creating a single, more diversified fund that is less vulnerable to regional economic problems. In addition, a merger of the funds would more accurately reflect the reality of today's financial services industry, in which 46 percent of the SAIF deposits are held by commercial banks and FDIC-regulated state savings banks. In fact, the funds have lost their independent identities, and we should rationalize their structure. Both industries should support the change as bringing needed rationality and stability to the deposit insurance funds.

The merger of the funds is an issue that I therefore believe merits independent consideration and Congressional action in the near term.

I look forward to working closely with my colleagues on this very critical issue.

TRIBUTE TO LEE KANON ALPERT

**HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN**

OF CALIFORNIA

**HON. BRAD SHERMAN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 9, 2000*

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, my colleague, Mr. SHERMAN, and I, today pay tribute to Lee Kanon Alpert, who has been selected to receive this year's prestigious Fernando Award for outstanding volunteerism. He will be honored Friday March 10, 2000 at the 41st Annual Special Recognition Dinner by the Board of Directors of the Fernando Award Foundation and his name will be placed alongside previous winners at the base of the magnificent bronze statue of "Fernando" which stands in the San Fernando Valley Civic Center.

The Fernando Award was created to honor individuals who have exemplified leadership, volunteerism and dedication. It is recognized as the leading award for civic accomplishment in the San Fernando Valley. The process by which selection is made each year includes extensive participation by community organizations and community leaders. This year that process has yielded a particularly worthy recipient.

Lee has been a practicing attorney for over 28 years. In his distinguished legal career, he has developed expertise in numerous areas of the law, including administrative and governmental relations, arbitration and mediation, family law and real estate transactions. Despite his extensive professional responsibilities, he has taken an active role in the community, serving on numerous boards and commissions, providing public commentary on radio and television programs, writing articles and editorials for legal and news publications and assuming leadership roles within a variety of civic organizations.

Lee Alpert currently serves as President of the Los Angeles City Board of Building and Safety Commission and is outgoing president of the California State University Northridge, Advisory Board. He is the current co-chair of the California State Assembly Business Advisory Commission which provides counsel to Assembly member Robert Hertzberg. He has previously served as the co-chair of the California State Senate Small Business Advisory Commission. Since 1993 he has chaired the Governing Board of Directors of the Encino—Tarzana Regional Medical Centers (Hospitals) Joint Venture between American Medical International (AMI) and Health Trust, Inc.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished colleagues, please join in paying tribute to Lee Alpert. We are grateful for the tireless service he has given to his community and the many ways he exemplifies good citizenship. We congratulate him on the well deserved honor he is about to receive.

HONORING DR. IRVING SMILER  
FOR HIS FIFTY YEARS OF SERVICE  
TO THE FRANKFORD COMMUNITY

**HON. ROBERT A. BORSKI**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 9, 2000*

Mr. BORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Irving Smiler for his fifty years of service to the Frankford Community.

During the post World War II era, Dr. Irving Smiler rose to reclaim one's sense of nationalism for the American ideals of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Dr. Smiler devoted his entire life for the betterment of others. Dr. Smiler, a native Philadelphian, located his pursuit in the Frankford Community and for the past fifty years toiled to create a community worth noting. I am honored to know an individual of such character, voice, and determination.

Dr. Smiler advanced the meaning of an honest life by devoting his mindset to the study of Podiatry. After completely his undergraduate work at Temple University College of Podiatric Medicine in 1948, he felt the true testament of the "American Dream" by struggling to locate a place of business to put that education into action. Finally, he located Frankford and Pratt where he went into business with a young optometrist. Together they formed a practice and a lasting friendship in the heart of Frankford.

To further advance his practice and knowledge base, Dr. Smiler gained more autonomy and liberty by acquiring a Doctorate of Podiatric Medicine in the late 1960's. Skillfully juggling his responsibilities to his beloved wife and three children, he managed to publish several medical journals and a book entitled, *Geriatric Foot Care: An Aging Challenge*. These publications served solely as a foundation for Dr. Smiler's devotion and dedication to the education of others which was apparent through his numerous lectures to the Frankford Hospital Community.

The pursuit of happiness in the eyes of Dr. Smiler based upon his curriculum vitae and his professional development was twofold, first to the study of Podiatry and secondly to the betterment of the community. Dr. Smiler is a solid witness and steward of the American ideals of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Irving Smiler should be commended for his tireless pursuit to support the development of the Frankford Community from its post World War II conception to even beyond the new millennium. I congratulate and highly revere Dr. Smiler upon this most glorious occasion on his fifty years of service and I offer him my best wishes in the coming years.

**LUTHER MASINGILL**

**HON. ZACH WAMP**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 9, 2000*

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a citizen who has contributed as much as anyone in the Third District of Tennessee to the wonderful quality of life that all of us

who live there are privileged to enjoy. The occasion is his 78th birthday, but this tribute could be delivered any day. It is a testament to how universally known, loved and admired he is that you only have to say the word "Luther," and just about anyone will know you are referring to Luther Masingill, who has made Chattanooga's mornings brighter for 60 years.

He signed on as host of his near universally known morning show on WDEF Radio, then an AM only station, on December 31, 1940. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was President then, and we were on the eve of World War II. Luther has seen Chattanooga—and the world—change mightily during his years on the air. Eleven U.S. Presidents as well as numerous Tennessee governors and Chattanooga mayors have come and gone while Luther has held sway on the air. Luther has stayed on, however; and the "secrets" of his success and value to the Chattanooga area have remained the same.

His radio show, now broadcast on WDEF AM and FM from 6–9 a.m. each weekday morning, does not focus on the controversies that tear us apart. By design, Luther devotes his show to the things that bring us together and make us human. Is your dog or cat missing? Would you like to buy or sell an animal? Is your civil club meeting or having a sale? His show is very much about neighbors helping neighbors and swapping information across the backyard fence, or at the grocery store, or after church. And his devoted listeners treat Luther as their friend and neighbor, which indeed he is.

Luther plays relaxing, traditional music in between announcements; and his warm, reassuring voice has made countless folks in Southeast Tennessee, North Georgia, North Alabama and Western North Carolina begin the day in a better spirit, no matter what the day may bring. He also does a spot on the noon news on Channel 12, WDEF television, and he's been with that station since it signed on in 1954.

Today, March 9, 2000, is your 78th birthday, Luther; and so we say a loud "Happy Birthday!" and thanks for all you have done to enrich our lives and communities. And here's wishing you many more years on the air!

#### PROVIDE RELIEF TO AMERICAN ENERGY CONSUMERS: SUSPEND THE TARIFF ON NUCLEAR STEAM GENERATORS

#### HON. MAC COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, in ongoing efforts to ensure safety and efficiency, nuclear power plants must periodically replace their steam generators. When a Florida manufacturing plant closes its doors following the delivery of two steam generators this year, there will no longer be any steam generator producers in the United States. Consequently, the 103 nuclear power facilities located in the United States will have no choice but to import replacement steam generators.

Under the Harmonized Tariff Schedule, steam generators imported for use in nuclear power plants are taxed at a duty rate of 5.2 percent (except those imported from Canada,

where a zero duty rate applies). Importing a single \$30 million steam generator results in a tariff of approximately \$1.56 million. Because nuclear plants generally replace two of these generators at a time, the cost of this hidden tax to consumers is considerable. Unless it is addressed, this duty will increase the cost of supplying electricity to Georgia's rate payers by \$2.7 million this year. Such unnecessary expenses are inevitably incorporated into the rate base.

According to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), at least a dozen nuclear power plants are planning to replace their steam generators over the next several years. Since there are no domestic manufacturers, there is no legitimate reason to continue imposing this duty. American consumers should not be required to bear this unnecessary cost.

Today, with the support and original cosponsorships of colleagues from Tennessee, Arizona, Georgia, and Connecticut, I am introducing legislation that will suspend the duty on steam generators for nuclear facilities for five years, providing significant relief for energy consumers around the country. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this legislation.

#### HONORING NORTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER JIM GRAHAM

#### HON. BOB ETHERIDGE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 2000

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of myself and Mr. PRICE of North Carolina to honor a great American and a true friend to farmers, North Carolina Agricultural Commissioner Jim Graham. When Jim announced that he would not be a candidate for re-election to the post he has held since 1964, citizens of the state could be pardoned if they looked to the heavens for a possible misalignment of the planets. After all, this individual has become a North Carolina icon, beloved by the farmers he promised "to take care of," and by individual citizens who appreciated his unfailing good humor and dedication. "I love my job," Jim Graham said at the end of every speech he gave. He meant it, and the people knew.

Still, North Carolinians will understand and approve of the Commissioner's decision. He is, after all, now 78 years of age; he has served well and long; and he deserves a respite from the day-to-day turmoil that is characteristic of any public office. His friends—and all of North Carolina is filled with Jim Graham's friends—wish for him peace and joy for the rest of his years.

But it will be difficult to conjure up his successor, and he will be missed. It is extremely doubtful that any campaign for Agricultural Commissioner will ever be as colorful as those run by Graham, who could bray like the donkey of the party he represented and was not above making promises that others would never have dared keep. Such as the one Graham made that he would kiss the north end of a mule who was headed south if a particular county would vote Democratic from the top of the ticket to the bottom. And it did, and he did, to the amusement of the whole state's media.

Graham came to the job as Commissioner of Agriculture like an eagle returning to its nest—without hesitation. Reared on a farm in Rowan County, he knows from whereof he speaks when he talks about the "sweat and blood" farmers must expend in order to make a living. From day one, his love for those who till the soil has been unquestioned.

The Commissioner was born on April 7, 1921 to a Rowan County couple, the late James T. and Laura Graham. He attended high school in Rowan County and is a graduate of his beloved North Carolina State University. Graham taught agriculture in Iredell County for three years, then because superintendent of Upper Mountain Research State in Laurel Springs before becoming manager of the Winston-Salem Fair for three years. After a one-year stint as secretary of the North Carolina Hereford Association, he became general manager of the State Farmers Market. Governor Terry Sanford, who never hesitated when the job came open upon the death of L.Y. Ballentine, appointed him Commissioner of Agriculture in 1964.

Commissioner Graham's tenure as Agricultural Commissioner coincided with North Carolina's transition from a largely rural agriculture state known chiefly for its tobacco to the growing Sun Belt technology giant it is becoming today. The Research Triangle was in its infancy when Graham took office. Today, it is the heartbeat of North Carolina, propelling the state into an Information Age where the assumed parameters change by the day.

Jim Graham prospered in that atmosphere, glorifying farmers wherever he went. He also began promoting new crops North Carolina farmers had not grown before. Within the department, he hired good people, insisted that they run an efficient agency, and he expanded the agency as the state grew. He organized state farmers markets in Asheville, Greensboro, Charlotte, Raleigh, and Lumberton, but he also promoted the use of microelectronics technology for the inspection of meat, poultry and seafood so consumers could be protected.

Graham was an early proponent of foreign trade, realizing that North Carolina farmers would be better off if they could sell their products to the rest of the world. Today, the state is one of the leaders in the export of agricultural products. The department ran a boll weevil eradication program that was so successful that cotton is once again a stable crop in the state. The department modernized its soil testing service and promoted it heavily, thereby increasing per acre production for all crops.

Commissioner Graham, ever the showman on behalf of agriculture, was in his element as he grew the North Carolina State Fair into an event that today attracts more than 6 million persons annually. The State Fair is now 10 days of the best that North Carolina farmers, dairymen, and craftsmen can produce, surrounded by enough entertainment to make the Fair an October delight for young and old. Presiding over it is always the "Sod Father" in his cowboy hat and boots, typically with a crowd following him around the fairgrounds.

As Commissioner, Graham has been honored with dozens of awards and distinguished service citations. Catawba College has awarded him the Honorary doctor of Humanitarian Service, and NC State named him the winner of its alumni Meritorious Service Award.