

before the eruption, the Forest Service estimated more than half a million people visited the Mount St. Helens/Spirit Lake area. Few people at the time realized or could have predicted the awesome, majestic, primal and dreadful power that the eruption would soon provide.

After the eruption of 1980, in 1982 the U.S. Congress created the 110,000 acre National Volcanic Monument to serve as a center for research, education and recreation. Inside the Mount St. Helens monument, the environment is left to respond naturally to the disturbance brought about by the eruption.

Now, 20 years later, the land around the mountain is slowly healing itself. Nature is covering the scars of the eruption and the native plants and animals are beginning to thrive again. Mount St. Helens is now a place where tens of thousands of visitors flock every year from across the country and from around the world to witness both the destructive power and the healing power of nature. Local residents and businesses in Clark, Skamania, Lewis and Cowlitz Counties are all present and available for visitors to enjoy this wonderful facility, and they have really responded well and transformed this region to celebrate what is now, as I mentioned earlier, a treasure.

People often ask me, what did we learn from the eruption of Mount St. Helens? Clearly, we have learned many scientific things, but I also think the eruption of Mount St. Helens has taught us two lessons that humankind too often forgets, the lessons of humility and of cooperation.

No one that remembers the sight of 400 million tons of earth and rock being thrown into the sky can fail to understand man's small place in the universe, and everyone who visits Mount St. Helens Monument today soon realizes the level of dedication, hard work and cooperation it has taken to rebuild the area and the communities.

Much of our State's growth and history, from its early exploration and settlement to the construction of the northern railroad and the massive hydroelectric system, to the creation of the national monument built on the blast site of volcanoes, are the result of a farsighted, courageous and cooperative thinking and working people.

Citizens of the Pacific Northwest, who, in the words of Captain George Vancouver, "Attempt to enrich nature by the industry of man," have set aside their differences and joined forces to make our region one of the most beautiful and welcoming places in America. I am confident that those who visit Mount St. Helens this year and all of those who visit the mountain in the next 20 years will make even greater strides in reawakening the beauty of Mount St. Helens, and will make Washington State an even greater place to live, work and visit.

I invite people from throughout this country to come see what is an amazing geological marvel. You will find

friendly, helpful local natives, willing to assist you, to make sure your visit is pleasurable and enjoyable, and you will see one of the most incredible sites in North America, Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CONDEMNING THE ACTIONS OF IRAN REGARDING THIRTEEN JEWISH CITIZENS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, before I speak about what I want to speak about, listening to my colleague talk about 20 years to the day of the eruption of Mount St. Helens, that was May 18, 1980, and people are always amazed when they mention Mount St. Helens, and I say, "Oh, yes, that was May 18, 1980," and they cannot understand how I can remember the exact date. I was married on May 18, 1980, so today is the 20th anniversary of my marriage.

I do not know if there is some kind of lesson there, but I am glad the gentleman spoke about it, because it has been a good 20 years.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the plight of 13 Iranian Jews who are on trial in Iran in a phony trial, in a show trial, in a disgraceful trial. These people are charged with supposedly spying for the United States and Israel, and were arrested on Passover of 1999. They have been imprisoned for a year without legal representation, and they are denied the right to choose their lawyer. Their trials are going on now.

Mr. Speaker, Iran must know that it cannot hope to normalize relations with the United States, certainly, and with most of the world, as long as these phony show trials are going on. These 13 people are innocent, even though some of them have been forced to supposedly confess. The trials are closed. No one is permitted to observe, not the diplomatic community, not the Jewish community, not human rights activists, and they are being tried in revolutionary courts which are not under the control of the reformist-minded President, Khatami. In fact, it is quite apparent that these 13 Iranian Jews are pawns, pawns in a power struggle between hard-liners and moderates in Iran. Unfortunately, these people are pawns, and no one knows how this trial, this staged trial, will turn out.

We have a resolution in this House, H. Con. Res. 307, sponsored by the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN) and the gentleman from Connecticut

(Mr. GEJDENSON), and this House would do well to pass it very quickly, condemning these trials and exposing them for what they are.

Today, unfortunately, the World Bank loaned Iran \$232 million. Our government, the President and Madeleine Albright, the Secretary of State, rightfully said this was not the thing to do at the very time that these show trials are going on, and shame on the World Bank for doing this.

I think that Iran ought to understand that there is a price to pay for what they are doing, and only if the world community expresses outrage, only if we in the United States keep the focus on this trial, then perhaps, and only perhaps, these 13 innocent Iranian Jews who are being used as pawns will be ultimately set free.

□ 2045

So I think it is very, very important that we in the Congress keep the focus on this trial; that we not allow Iran to continue this sham, and that they understand again that there is a price to pay for doing these kinds of phony trials.

Jews have lived in Iran for 2,700 years. In 1979, before the so-called Iranian revolution, there were 80,000 Jews in Iran. Today there are anywhere from 25,000 to 30,000. Seventeen Jews have been executed since 1979, and the community is very much threatened. They are allowed to travel somewhat, but not allowed to travel to Israel.

So I think it is, again, very appropriate at this time that we continue to focus on this trial; that we not rest until these innocent people are set free and that the world community collectively let Iran know that there is a price to pay and there will be a price to pay if these people are harmed.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND RETIREMENT FOR WOMEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALDEN of Oregon). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, what I want to do tonight is take a little bit of time to talk about, I think, an issue that is so critically important and vital to women in the United States, and that is Social Security reform.

There is a very, very important debate that is going on about the future of Social Security right now, and I think it is important that women are included in this discussion. All of America's seniors have a stake in the conversation and the debate and the discourse about Social Security, but women have the biggest stake of all in the future of the program. We need to make sure that we undertake the right kind of Social Security reform for America's women.

Since 1935, America's women have been able to count on the guaranteed

income of Social Security. I make a point here, because the bedrock and fundamental principle of Social Security is that in the retirement years there is a guaranteed income on a monthly basis for the duration of an individual's lifetime, based on the amount of work and income one made during their working years.

Since 1935, as I said, women have been able to count on that guaranteed income of Social Security. No matter what the stock market does, no matter what the state of the economy, Social Security has been there giving America's seniors the ability to live with independence and with dignity. It is, in fact, one of America's greatest success stories.

Times do change and it is clear that we need to look at how we strengthen Social Security and make sure that it is safe and secure today for America's seniors but as well for the next generations of retirees.

In 1999, there were 3.4 workers for each Social Security beneficiary, but in the year 2035 there will be only 2 workers per beneficiary. It has to be the right reform for everyone, and particularly, as I have said, for women.

Social Security is uniquely important to women because retirement is especially hard on women. My mother, who is 86 years old, once said to me, Rosa, these are supposed to be the golden years but somehow they are often the lead years. My mother was essentially expressing, I think, and giving voice to the expression of the frustration and the fear that many elderly women have.

In old age, women face all sorts of obstacles, stability and security, and without Social Security these obstacles would be even larger. Women account for 60 percent of Social Security beneficiaries even though they only make up roughly one half of the population. Three-quarters of widowed and unmarried elderly women rely on Social Security for over half of their income, and because women spend less time in the workforce than men, they are less likely to have pensions or to have been able to save and invest for their future.

So that Social Security is their bedrock. It provides women with a dignified retirement that they can rely on.

Women live longer than men. Women make less money than men in our society today; as a matter of fact, about 75 cents on the dollar. Women are also more likely to be dependents of workers and are dependent on their Social Security in their retirement years. As I said a minute ago, that women often-times outlive their spouses.

In my State of Connecticut alone Social Security lowers the poverty rate among elderly women from 46 percent to 8 percent, 46 percent to 8 percent. That means that Social Security lifts over 100,000 Connecticut women out of poverty through Social Security. As I have just mentioned, during their

years in the workforce women earn an average of about 75 cents for every dollar that men earn. In fact, the average female college graduate earns little more than the average male high school graduate. Again, for all of these reasons, strengthening and preserving Social Security is essential to the financial stability of America's hard working women. Again, it has to be the right reform for women.

This week George W. Bush, the governor of Texas, presented us with an example of what, in my view, is the wrong kind of reform for Social Security, the wrong kind of reform which introduces risk, takes money away from Social Security, undermines the guaranteed minimum Social Security benefit, undermines the guaranteed minimum Social Security income, and leaves the retirement of America's seniors in the hands of the stock market.

In fact, when George Bush was asked whether or not, under his program, seniors could expect a guaranteed minimum income, George Bush told America's seniors, and I quote, "maybe; maybe not."

That is not a risk that America's seniors should be forced to take. Just let me say, because I said at the outset, one of the bedrock principles of Social Security has been this guaranteed annual income. We turn Social Security on its head if we can no longer guarantee an annual income to seniors, so that this proposal, in fact, turns that principle on its head; does not make that guarantee and in addition to that increases individual risk.

Now, the reason, one of the principal reasons, why Mr. Bush is forced to gamble with the retirement of America's seniors is because instead of using the historic budget surplus that we have, and it is historic, we have not seen a budget surplus in the last several decades. Governor Bush proposes to spend the bulk of that surplus on a trillion dollar tax cut that by all accounts, not my account, by economists, by some of the leading conservative publications, by the Wall Street Journal and others, is that its primary beneficiaries are those who are at the upper levels of the income scale, some of the wealthiest people in the United States.

Now it is all right to think about giving people a tax cut, and I am a big supporter of tax cuts, but tax cuts that focus on working middle class families and not those who are doing well. That is not to say that they should not do well or they should not receive some acknowledgment or benefit from that wealth, but at this particular moment in the history of our country that is not where we ought to direct our attention.

What we ought to do with the surplus is take this opportunity to strengthen Social Security, to strengthen Medicare, to build on Medicare with a prescription drug benefit, pay down our debt, thereby helping to lower the interest rates in this country, which di-

rectly benefits families who are struggling with mounting bills and credit cards and education loans and car loans. That is how we ought to utilize that surplus, in my view.

It is the wrong kind of reform to take this surplus and focus it in on a trillion dollar tax cut. It is wrong for America's seniors and it is especially wrong for women.

A more prudent plan would be to invest that surplus in Social Security. Let us not gamble with it, with the ups and downs of the stock market.

We have seen in recent weeks and months about the fluctuation of the stock market. If we act now to use this historic opportunity, we can use the budget surplus to pay down that debt; to use the interest to strengthen Social Security; to protect its solvency through the year 2050. This is a sure bet. It is a sound investment for America's future and for America's seniors.

There are two visions of Social Security's future. One of the plans strengthens Social Security by using the budget surplus to pay down the national debt, using the savings from the interest to strengthen Social Security and extend its life. The other, in my view, jeopardizes the Social Security system by using the budget surplus for a tax cut.

We are at a critical moment in a debate and dialogue, and I encourage people around the country to think about this issue, to make their voices heard on this issue.

I want to try to provide a few specifics with regard to women and Social Security. I talked about women earning an average of 75 cents for every dollar that men earn, and women earn an average of \$250,000 less per lifetime than men. Three-quarters of widowed or unmarried elderly women rely on Social Security for over half of their income. Women spend less time in the workplace because they take an average of 11.5 years out of their careers to care for their families. Social Security helps to compensate for this in the following ways: Social Security provides retirement benefits that equal half of a husband's benefit. Divorced homemakers who are married for at least 10 years can also receive these benefits. For widows, Social Security provides benefits equal to 100 percent of their husband's benefits. By working parttime, women reduce the amount of funds they can put away for retirement or their eligibility for employee-provided pensions. In 1996, 49 percent of women between 25 and 44 were employed full-time, compared to 74 percent of men. That information is taken from the Institute for Women's Policy Research in a publication called the Impact of Social Security Reform on Women.

□ 2100

In 1996, almost one-third of women between 25 and 44 were employed part-time compared to less than one out of five for men. Because women do take

time out to care for their families, and because they only earn 75 cents for every \$1 that men earn, women will have much less to invest in private retirement accounts.

Privatization, as has been suggested by George Bush, would cut spousal benefits by one-third, leaving many wives at near poverty level and penalizing them for taking time out of the labor force to care for their families.

This notion of privatization is very dangerous for women. While it is suggested today that there only be 2 percent of the benefits invested in private accounts, there is some information that George Bush talked about with reporters over the last couple of days that in fact could lead, that his plan could lead to complete privatization of social security. Let me just mention some of this information.

On May 17, George Bush said it was possible that workers would eventually be allowed to invest their entire social security tax, not just a portion. The Houston Chronicle reported, "Bush on Tuesday said his plan to create private savings accounts could be the first step toward a complete privatization of social security."

The New York Times reported, answering a question about his plan, that Mr. Bush said, "The government could not go from one regime to another overnight. It is going to take a while to transition to a system where personal savings accounts are the predominant part of the investment vehicle. So this is a step toward a completely different world, and an important step." That was reported in the New York Times on May 15.

The other information here that I think, when asked the question about whether or not Americans could lose money through the plan that he proposed, he said that it was "conceivable that a worker taking advantage of the investment accounts would get a lower guaranteed income from social security."

The New York Times reported that, and I quote, "Bush also refused to say how much benefits might be reduced for workers who created private investment accounts. 'That is all up for discussion,' Mr. Bush said." That was reported in the New York Times on May 17.

As I said earlier, as reported in the Dallas Morning News, "Asked whether he envisions a system in which future beneficiaries will receive no less than they would have under the current system, Mr. Bush said, 'Maybe, maybe not.'"

He has also admitted that he has not accounted for trillion dollar costs in making a transition to this new program. He acknowledged that he has not fully accounted for the cost of moving from the current system to his proposed one, costs that Vice President GORE pegs at \$900 billion.

It is not only the Vice President that has pegged these costs at a high rate, but we can again look to conservative

publications, economists, people who understand what the transition would mean, and the millions of dollars that it would cost and billions of dollars that it would cost to make that transition.

The Washington Post reported on May 11 that, "The plan laid out by George Bush leaves out one of the most important factors, the cost. According to a new report published by the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, Bush's privatization plan would cost \$900 billion over the first 10 years. These costs occur because the social security system must simultaneously pay out current benefits while privatization drains over 16 percent of the amount of money coming into the system. Combine this with the costs of George Bush's nearly \$2 trillion tax cut, and the Bush plan will leave multitrillion dollar debts as far as the eye can see."

The essential issue here is that there is not any question that we must do something to make sure that we strengthen and protect the social security system in the future because of what it has meant in the lives of working Americans.

Today, two-thirds of seniors rely on social security for over one-half of their income. We cannot play fast and loose with reform of the social security system. At a time when we need to make the reforms, we have a clear opportunity, given the historic surplus that we have.

In a prudent society and in a commonsense society, it makes all the sense in the world to say, let us take this opportunity to put the twin pillars of retirement security, social security and Medicare, on the path to real stability for today's people who need to take advantage of these systems and are eligible for them, and for those who come along in the future.

That is what I am trying to suggest here this evening, as well as to make the point that, particularly for women in our society, if we play fast and loose with the social security system, we will increase the ranks of poor older women.

Today one of the largest groups of our society who in their later years find themselves in poverty are older women. We should not compound that problem at this moment in our history, not when we have worked so hard and diligently to try to put our fiscal house in order.

Mr. Speaker, I call on my colleagues and I call on the American people to engage in this debate and in this discussion, and pay particular attention to what happens to women in our society as we go about trying to reform our social security system.

THE SOLVENCY OF SOCIAL SECURITY AND THE ISSUE OF HEALTH CARE AND PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WALDEN of Oregon). Under the Speak-

er's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. GANSKE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) would like to enter into a discussion, if she has some time for a little bit.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Connecticut.

Ms. DELAURO. I would be happy to, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. GANSKE. I think we could have a very unusual discussion tonight.

I had originally thought about talking about a case of HMO abuse that was highlighted today in the Los Angeles Times about a 74-year-old woman who died of a ruptured aortic aneurysm, and maybe if I have some time after a while I will do that.

I was very moved by your presentation on social security. I think it is a very, very important issue. There is no doubt about it, that elderly women depend on social security in order to stay out of poverty. The statistics of the gentlewoman from Connecticut are very similar to Iowa, and maybe even more so in Iowa, because Iowa has the largest number of people over the age of 85 percentage-wise of any State in the country, and the majority of those people are women and widows.

Some of them have to choose. They live on that social security check, and they are now in the situation where they have to choose between their rent and some of their medications, so prescription drugs are involved in this. I think we could agree on some facts, and so I would like to get the gentlewoman's feedback on some of this.

The Social Security Advisory Committee's report says that as the baby boomers move into retirement in about 25 years, or the baby boomers start to retire about the year 2011, at which time my group and the gentlewoman's group will be retiring at one every 8 seconds, by about the year 2025, the trust funds are empty, and we will be faced with a couple of choices based on current projected income from the social security tax, which is 12.4 percent combined for individual and from their employer.

That is, we would either need to reduce benefits by about 25 percent at that time, because of such a large number of baby boomers in retirement, or, because, as the gentlewoman pointed out I think very correctly, we will have significantly reduced numbers of workers, maybe even at the point of two workers for every retiree, then another option would be to raise the withholding, their work tax, their payroll tax. We might have to do that by as much as 50 percent.

The third option that the Social Security Advisory Committee talked about, and about a year ago offered three different scenarios, was whether in fact we could increase the rate of return on the funds that are going in.

Senator KERRY and Senator MOYNIHAN have proposed, and I have gone