

and distinguished record of service to the Silicon Valley Jewish community. This Saturday, I will be joining many friends and community members to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of Hillel of Silicon Valley at “Hillel Goes to Hollywood,” a gala which will benefit this campus organization that fosters Jewish identity and connections at eight colleges and universities in the South Bay Area. Michele, known to many as “Mishy,” was selected as this year’s distinguished guest of honor for her many contributions to Hillel of Silicon Valley and the entire South Bay Area Jewish community.

Mishy Balaban has contributed to the growth of numerous Silicon Valley Jewish organizations. She served for many years as a member of the Allocations Committee, and then as campaign chair and president of the Women’s Division, of the Jewish Federation of Greater San Jose. She was also a member of the Yavneh Board of Trustees, and helped to establish Yavneh’s Technology Fund. Last year, in her capacity as president of the Yavneh Parent Association, she made great strides in revitalizing that organization.

Under Mishy’s guidance as president of the Advisory Board of Hillel of Silicon Valley, the chapter expanded to include students at the College of San Mateo, De Anza College Evergreen College, Foothill College, San Jose City College, Santa Clara University, and West Valley College, in addition the pre-existing members at San Jose State University. This expansion also included a move to a new home, significantly increased professional and volunteer staffing levels, and affiliation with International Hillel, the Foundation for Jewish Campus Life.

The evolution of Hillel of Silicon Valley into a full-fledged institution of the Jewish community can be greatly attributed to the continuing dedication of Mishy Balaban. She has put her community before her own needs, and set the standard for volunteer leadership. Mishy is the recipient of the “Exemplar of Excellence Award” from International Hillel for her work with Hillel of Silicon Valley, which, I think everyone in the Silicon Valley Jewish community would agree, thrives today thanks in large part to the dedication, love, and energy of this impressive woman.

INTRODUCING LEGISLATION TO AMEND THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 12, 2001

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to amend the Social Security Act to increase the maximum amount of the death benefit lump-sum from \$255 to \$1,000. The current benefit is not only grossly inadequate but unfairly distributed. It is an unjust system that deprives individuals and their families of up to a month’s worth of compensation. Even when the benefit is received, it is too little to be of much significance. It appears that our Social Security system fails to adequately provide for the care of our elderly citizens, even when they die.

Under current law, social security benefits are not paid for the month in which a recipient dies. For example, if an individual were to die

on July 31, his heirs will receive no compensation for all of the expenses incurred during the month of July. If that person had died on August 1 instead, he or she would have received full coverage for the previous month. In some cases, when the Social Security Administration is not told of the death in time to stop the payment, family members of the deceased must return the check for the month. It is nothing short of disgraceful to add the psychological stress of dealing with complex financial legalities to family members who are already grieving for a loved one.

I support legislation that would entitle an individual to benefits proportionate to the number of days during the month that he or she lived. One of my distinguished colleagues has already introduced a bill to this end, H.R. 210, the Social Security Descendent’s Family Relief Act of 2001. It makes much more sense that if a person lives until July 15, he should receive compensation for those 15 days.

In addition to this unreasonable benefit system, the \$255 lump-sum available to families of the deceased is woefully inadequate. The \$255 sum, which was provisioned in 1981 and was a modest sum at that time, is not even remotely close to meeting the expenses families face in the 21st century. What cost \$255 in 1981 costs over \$513 today. Surely it is not unreasonable for families to expect an inflation-adjustment for that benefit. Furthermore, the average retired worker receives \$845 in social security monthly benefits. Clearly a \$255 lump sum does not compensate for this amount. And, according to the National Funeral Directors Association, the national average cost of a funeral is \$5700. Families need more, not less, money at this time.

My bill would increase the amount of the lump sum benefit from \$255 to \$1000. That equates to a net gain of \$745, compared to a potential loss of up to \$845 under the current system should an individual die towards the end of the month and thus fall victim to pro-rating.

Mr. Speaker, surely one of our most important priorities should be to give American families the money they need and rightfully deserve. It is our duty to correct the discrepancies in a flawed process so that all Americans enjoy the benefits of a system designed to help them. I sincerely hope that my colleagues will work with me to ensure the passage of this important legislation.

TO HONOR THE PHOENIX FIRE DEPARTMENT’S URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM/ARIZONA TASK FORCE-1

HON. ED PASTOR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 12, 2001

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to honor a group of true American heroes who are a source of great pride for Phoenix, Arizona and our country. The group of people I am speaking about are the Phoenix Fire Department’s Urban Search and Rescue Team/Arizona Task Force-1. Sixty-three members of this 200-member team, also known as Phoenix Fire AZTF-1 traveled from Phoenix to New York City on Sept. 19 to offer their assistance to their fellow firefighters in New York

and other rescuers helping in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 destruction of the World Trade Centers.

The Phoenix team, which consists of rescue and technical specialists, doctors, paramedics, canine search specialists, logistics specialists, structural engineers, hazardous materials specialists, a chaplain and task force managers, was among the group of rescuers summoned to New York City by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to assist public safety officials. Although they knew a grim task was before them, they considered it to be an honor to be selected to help out in this time of national tragedy. Eagerly, they awaited to be called to duty in New York City and once they were called, they transported a cache that included 60,000 pounds of specialized equipment, making them fully self-sufficient upon arrival at the scene of the World Trade Center.

Upon arrival, the Phoenix team tirelessly and passionately used their expertise to help other firefighters and public safety officials dig through the rubble for survivors and bodies of the victims. They remained focused on the task, knowing that some of the victims would be other firefighters, police officers or public safety officials. Surrounded by human tragedy, they steadfastly worked for a week assisting where they could.

Personally, I was very moved when I visited the World Trade Center disaster site on Sept. 22 and ran into this team from my hometown. I was filled with pride to see them at work in New York, knowing that they were helping America, again, in its time of need. As you may know, AZTF-1 also was called to duty to Oklahoma City after the bombing in 1995.

Most of us don’t have dangerous jobs and will probably never face the devastation seen at the World Trade Center. But everyday, firefighters risk the greatest gift of all—their lives—to save lives. They do it unhesitatingly and with a sense of duty. The incidents of Sept. 11 were very tragic, but the united effort by all firefighters and emergency service workers who came together on that horrible day will always be an example to all Americans that this country is at its strongest when we work together. I thank them for that lesson and with great pride, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Firefighters from Phoenix Fire Department’s Urban Search and Rescue Team/Arizona Task Force-1.

STATE OF EMERGENCY AT BORDER

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 12, 2001

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, thanks to the gentleman from California, BOB FILNER, for organizing this special order series.

Living on the border is never easy.

NAFTA—commerce in the 1990s—brought lower unemployment, a larger tax base for border communities.

Like the nation, South Texas affected by national economy . . . so the economy been hurt by the dip in the national economy.

Increased inspections as a result of heightened security have resulted in longer wait times (sometimes more than four hours), that

discourage thousands of Mexican citizens who legally cross into the U.S. to shop and conduct business along the border.

As former law enforcement officer, a border member—understand the need for security.

Say this only to illustrate small part of the picture that affects the border economy.

Weekend after the attack on the United States, barge hits the only bridge connecting South Padre Island to the mainland of South Texas.

Accident added even more to the burden of a faltering economy.

On Wednesday, immigration inspectors began checking the ID of each pedestrian against databases of 19 federal agencies, adding much more strain to an already difficult situation.

Finally, with Congress not extending laser visa deadline flow of traffic and commerce across our borders considerably slower.

Join my colleagues in asking President Bush to declare a state of emergency along the border in response to these assorted body-blows to the border economy.

The hostilities of September 11—and the resulting increased security throughout our nation—affected all of us . . . but they affect those who live on the border most profoundly.

Need to protect borders—ensure that terrorists who would do us harm not enter U.S. via our neighbors.

Stories of economic hardship in the past month are heart-wrenching.

Need for relief along the border in the economic stimulus package is evident.

In the Brownsville-Matamoros area: Traffic at bridges has decreased 40% (causing area bridges to lose almost \$5,000 daily) and businesses along the border are seeing sharp declines in sales; border crossers face increased border wait times for vehicle and pedestrian traffic; the causeway accident has had a major impact; under-staffing of Border Patrol and Customs agents continues to cause concern; lack of attention and sensitivity to border community are also concerns; and the laser visa deadline has only exacerbated the situation and will have drastic effects as the holiday season nears.

The Brownsville-South Padre Island airport is feeling the direct impact of the terrorist attack on airport revenue: As is the case elsewhere in the country, passenger traffic there is down about 35%; the airport projects their annual cost for new security measures alone \$632,000—an unbudgeted, unfunded cost which equals 35% of the annual airport budget, and the overall cost, of all these factors, to the airport will be \$845,000.

Border economies require immediate help.

Low-cost loans and grants, and other forms of help, are urgently needed.

Everything is affected—tourism, airports, maquiladora production and Brownsville merchants.

Here is an example of how intertwined the U.S.-Mexican economies are: Mexicans who come to the U.S. to shop derive much of that money from Winter Texans, who cross the border about six times while they are in the Valley.

This combination of factors means Winter Texans will cross less, therefore spend less—with a result of less income for Mexicans to spend in the U.S.

I urge the Ways and Means Committee, as well as the House leadership, to consider eco-

nomic relief for the border communities in the upcoming stimulus package.

IN HONOR OF THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VETERAN'S OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE U.S.—NATHAN HALE POST NO. 1469

HON. GARY L. ACKERMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 12, 2001

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S., Nathan Hale Post No. 1469. On October 16, 2001, the post will celebrate its 75th Anniversary in Huntington New York.

Chartered by Congress on October 14, 1926, the Post began with a membership of 40 veterans. Included among the original members were veterans of World War I, as well as a veteran of the Spanish-American War who survived the 1898 torpedo attack on the USS Maine. Today, with nearly 800 members, Post No. 1469 is the largest Veterans of Foreign Wars Post on Long Island and throughout downstate New York. Present members are veterans who proudly served in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon, the Gulf War as well as conflicts and actions around the globe.

The leadership of the Post has been very active in the local level offices as well as the County, District and State offices. The current Commander serves both as Post Commander and Jr. Vice Commander of Suffolk County which has a total of 48 Posts.

Post No. 1469 has also made outstanding contributions, both financially and with their time and efforts, to the local community. These include sponsoring the local Boy Scouts Troop members, holding chairs on the Town of Huntington Veterans Advisory Board, providing scholarships to students in the community and hosting ward parties for veterans confined to the local VA hospital.

I am proud to represent such an exceptional Post and wish them many more years of success as they celebrate their 75th Anniversary. I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to please join me in recognizing this milestone and congratulating these brave veterans.

FARM SECURITY ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. EVA M. CLAYTON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 5, 2001

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, the reauthorization of this country's agricultural policy is an occasion that we should treat with great seriousness and thoughtfulness. If we do not, we turn our backs not only on our agricultural producers, but on all of rural America.

Recent years have been devastating for our nation's farmers. Record low commodity prices, increased production overseas, and pressures from internal markets and agricultural consolidation have combined to depress farm income significantly. In recent years Congress has provided supplemental income as-

sistance to American farmers. While this has prevented mass bankruptcy among our farmers, it has done little to provide them with income stability or to give them an assurance that in future years the market will better serve them.

The Farm Security Act, H.R. 2646, provides American farmers with a secure safety net. With this safety net firmly in place, some of our farmers can plant secure in the knowledge that, while the markets may fail them, America will not. The Farm Security Act sends the important message to our farmers that, because you have supported us for so long, so too will we support you. I support the Farm Security Act because it provides the measures necessary to ensure that agriculture can play the same important role in the 21st century that it did in the 20th.

However, the reauthorization of our farm policy must not be about only agricultural production, but about the long-term viability of our rural communities. The Agriculture Committee has been vested with responsibility for all of rural America. It is therefore appropriate that the Farm Bill should include significant components that speak to the specific non-farm struggles of rural America. While it is true that the farm economy must be strong for rural America to prosper, the farm economy alone is not enough to prevent the "great hollowing" out of rural America currently taking place.

The Farm Security Act, by including \$2 billion dollars for rural development, recognizes the entire mosaic of our rural communities and takes steps to provide for their long-term health. I am especially pleased that the Farm Security Act provides significant rural development funds for water infrastructure and for rural strategic planning grants. Without a sound public and municipal infrastructure, our rural communities can have no economic base. Without funds for long-term planning and implementation, even the soundest of public infrastructures goes to waste. These two matters fit together for the benefit of our rural communities. I support the Farm Security Act, in part, because of the investment that it provides in these areas.

Finally, I am supportive of this Farm Bill because it recognizes the important connections between American agricultural producers and struggling working Americans who work so hard to put food on the table. This bill makes important investments in the Food Stamp Program that will make the program more user friendly both for those who utilize the Food Stamp Program and for those who administer it. I am especially proud of the measures that this bill takes to support working families who struggle in the low-wage sector of the economy. No longer is it enough just to have a job. In too many cases, a job isn't a ticket out of poverty but simply the maintenance of it. We must do more to support those working families who abide by the rules by ensuring that their children will not go to bed hungry.

This is not to say that I do not have reservations with the bill, some of them serious. In fact there are a number of areas where I believe that we can and should improve upon the bill reported out by the House of Representatives on Friday, October 5.

First, we must do more to pay attention to the needs of small, middle-income, and disadvantaged farmers. It is no secret that US farm policy has long favored large producers