

welfare, juvenile justice, and campaign finance reform. A League representative sits on the Rouge River Advisory Council, as well as the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments Educational Advisory Council. As spelled out in their original charter, the League's actions are always a reflection of their member's priorities.

I would like to recognize the current officers of the Dearborn/Dearborn Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters: Elizabeth Linick, Janice Berry, Mary Jo Durivage, Mary Anne Wilkinson, Jeni Dunn and Mary Bugeia. I thank all the fine members of this Chapter of the League for all their hard work over the past 50 years, and would ask that they keep it up. On the occasion of their 50th anniversary, I would ask all my colleagues to salute the Dearborn/Dearborn Heights Chapter of the League of Women Voters.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE DEFERRED ANNUITANT FAIRNESS ACT OF 2001

### HON. NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 18, 2001*

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, later today I will introduce legislation, the Deferred Annuity Fairness Act of 2001, to correct a glaring inequity in Federal retirement law. At a time when we are considering legislation to protect the hard-earned retirement benefits of working men and women—and give them more control and responsibility over their income in retirement, at least one class of federal government retirees find themselves at an unfair disadvantage and their retirement benefits eroded through no action of their own.

I speak of deferred annuitants of the federal government—employees who work for the Federal Government for at least five years, vest in the retirement program, and who separate from service before becoming eligible for immediate retirement. When these individuals claim their retirement annuity in later years, the pension benefit they have financed is eroded by inflation and they are put at a financial disadvantage which they cannot overcome.

Under current law and practice, the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund invests employee contributions but gives no added value to a retiree for the time his or her money was invested before the deferred annuity starts to be paid out. As a consequence, if two employees gave identical service, with the first retiring in 1970 and the second in 2000 with annuities for each starting in 2000, the second retiree receives nearly five times the annuity of the first. In addition, the spouse of a CSRS retiree is not protected during the deferral period. (This protection is already afforded to FERS spouses and spouses of Members of Congress participating in CSRS.)

This legislation will make two primary changes in current law to correct this inequity. First, it will compensate deferred annuitants for the added value generated over the deferred period from investing what was deposited into the trust fund on behalf of the employee up to the time of separation from service is compensated. Second, it will eliminate the disparity in spousal protection for deferred annuitants covered under CSRS and FERS.

Mr. Speaker, fairness and equity should be the watchword when it comes to the treatment of our federal workforce—the hundreds of thousands of men and women who dedicate their lives to service to this nation and our people. With the changes proposed in the legislation I introduce today, federal employees who take a hiatus from their federal service before retiring will be protected from inflation and the erosion of their pension benefit available upon retirement. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of these changes.

This measure is endorsed by the National Association of Retired Federal Employees.

#### RETIREMENT OF TOM MILLER, PRINCIPAL OF ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL IN ST. JOSEPH, MICHIGAN

### HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 18, 2001*

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to offer heartfelt congratulations to Tom Miller. Throughout his career, Tom Miller has constantly demonstrated a commitment to the educational and athletic development of the future leaders of our society. His professional life has consisted of numerous positions of leadership at various schools in Southwest Michigan, including his current post as principal of St. Joseph High School, which he has served for over 23 years. Tom's dedication to the enhancement of the educational experience of young people is a truly noble quality, and one that will be sorely missed.

Additionally, Tom's involvement in the athletic arena of the school system has earned him a place in the Battle Creek St. Philip High School Athletic Hall of Fame. Tom spent numerous years involved in student athletics, his basketball teams enjoying a host of victories during his tenure. I would like to wish the best of luck to Tom in his retirement, which will allow him to spend the coming years with his family, including his wife Mary Lou and all of his loved ones.

#### CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 1, NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

### HON. PHILIP M. CRANE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 13, 2001*

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, I want to praise President Bush for putting forth an education plan that offered children in failing schools a chance to get a better education. It is too bad that Democrats and supporters of the failing status quo were allowed to gut the legislation, H.R. 1, at the Committee level to remove any chance for failing schools to successfully improve their performance or to let parents have the option to move their children to better schools.

I believe that control of education should be retained at the local level. Last year, Illinois high school students led the nation in Advanced Placement scores. With a few excep-

tions we have good schools in the 8th District, and I don't want to force parents, school boards, and teachers into a one-size fits all approach that might work in New York City or Atlanta but not in Barrington or Wauconda.

One of the reasons I supported broad-based tax relief, including eliminating the marriage tax penalty and doubling the child tax credit, is because it lets 70,000 married couples and families with 125,000 children in the 8th District of Illinois keep \$162 million per year in their pockets. That is \$162 million per year that families could spend in our district on education if they chose to do so.

Former President Ronald Reagan, in a March 12, 1983 radio address to the nation on education, said, "Better education doesn't mean a bigger Department of Education. In fact, that Department should be abolished. Instead, we must do a better job teaching the basics, insisting on discipline and results, encouraging competition and, above all, remembering that education does not begin with Washington officials or even State and local officials. It begins in the home, where it is the right and responsibility of every American."

When we send a dollar to the federal government from Illinois, we only get 75 cents back. In my district, we send more than \$2 to Washington and only get \$1 back. With a return like this, it is easy to see why I support letting taxpayers keep more of their hard-earned money and having parents decide locally how their money should be spent on education.

Federal education funding is at an all-time high, and H.R. 1 increases it by a huge amount. Yet, student achievement continues to lag. Most Republicans in Congress want to give local schools more freedom to use new models to solve old problems while maintaining high accountability standards. I am saddened that H.R. 1 does not accomplish this worthy goal.

One concept that has strong support from parents is President Bush's proposal to improve public education by testing children in reading and math in grades three through eight once each year. Under President Bush's proposal, schools would be held accountable for either improving scores or losing their federal money, which accounts for seven cents of every education dollar.

I fully support this provision and am gratified it has been included in the conference report before us today. In fact, during debate on H.R. 1 in May of this year, I voted against the amendment co-sponsored by Congressmen PETER HOEKSTRA and BARNEY FRANK to remove President Bush's test requirement from the bill. The tough new testing regimen designed to identify failing public schools—an idea at the heart of President Bush's education plan—survived when the amendment failed. But the rest of the President's plan to give local schools more control to make the changes necessary to improve and to give parents the option to move their children to a better private school were stripped out of the bill.

For the reasons I have outlined, I have decided to vote against H.R. 1. Again, I want to praise President Bush for his leadership in proposing creative solutions to improving the education of our children. I encourage him to continue to move the federal government out of the way and to give schools more flexibility and parents more choices for their children.

TRIBUTE TO THE STUDENTS AND STAFF OF BECKEMEYER GRADE SCHOOL, HILLSBORO, ILLINOIS

**HON. JOHN SHIMKUS**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 18, 2001*

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the students and staff of Beckemeyer Grade School in Hillsboro, Illinois, and the heartwarming project they undertook to bring comfort to the victims of the recent tragedies.

The attacks of September 11th were a horrible shock to everyone in the United States, but to none were they more devastating than to the victims and their families. American hearts went out to those who would now have to struggle on without the light and laughter of their loved ones who had died. The outpouring of support for these families was enormous, like a bright light of kindness that shone out through the darkness of the disaster. Money, well-wishes and prayers poured in from all across the nation.

Mr. Speaker, the students and staff of Beckemeyer Grade School were part of that outpouring. They purchased several thousand small, glass figurines, called Comfort Angels. These beautiful angels were meant to bring hope and well-wishes to all who viewed them. The people of Hillsboro, lead by their coordinator Pamela Hopper, then set an ambitious goal: to distribute an angel to the families of every victim of the tragedy.

They have come astonishingly close to that goal—thousands of Comfort Angels have been distributed to families all over the world. They have found their way to embassies, fire stations, Congressional offices, and homes in New York and Washington. Two thousand of them were distributed by the Salvation Army alone, at the Memorial for the Pentagon on October 11th. And the results have been equally amazing. Letters have poured into Hillsboro, filled with thanks and touching stories.

Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that the terrorists of September wished to divide and demoralize our country. Instead, in many ways they have energized us and brought us closer together. The amazing success of the people of Beckemeyer Grade School is a wonderful example of this—their faith and hard work has allowed them to make a difference in many lives, and they deserve my thanks and the thanks of these chambers.

COMMENDING THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY HOLIDAY TRAIN

**HON. JERROLD NADLER**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 18, 2001*

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, this year, the Canadian Pacific Railway Holiday Train embarked on its third annual "journey of goodwill" to collect food throughout Canada and the United States for those most in need. The two previous drives have collected 18 tons of food, and have raised more than \$500,000 to combat hunger. On December 4th, one of the three trains traveling throughout the United

States and Canada embarked on its journey from the Fresh Pond Junction Rail Yard in Queens, New York. There, the Canadian Pacific Railway hosted a special ceremony honoring and remembering the heroes of September 11th.

I would like to sincerely thank the Canadian Pacific Railway for having one of their beautifully decorated trains originate in New York City. This was a tribute to the men and women who lost their lives in the September 11th tragedy, as well as a tribute to their families. The victims' families were invited to the ceremony, and Christmas trees were given to all of the families of the firefighters and police officers who were killed. In addition, Canadian Pacific Railway donated \$100,000 to the NYSE Fund for Fallen Heroes. This kindness and generosity is just the most recent example of Canadian Pacific Railway's long standing commitment to the people of New York.

I commend the Canadian Pacific Railway on their benevolent gestures towards the city of New York, and thank them for not only supporting the United States and our families in this time of tragedy, but also for continuing their plight to feed the hungry.

IN HONOR OF MARY LOU WEISS UPON HER RETIREMENT FROM HERMOSA BEACH SCHOOL BOARD

**HON. JANE HARMAN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 18, 2001*

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a good friend, Mary Lou Weiss, who retires this month from the Hermosa Beach Unified School District Board of Trustees, on which she has served as Trustee for 16 years, including 6 tours as President.

In her capacity as a School Board Trustee, Mary Lou has been a strong advocate for Hermosa Beach children, helping to ensure they receive the best educational opportunities. Because of her knowledge and expertise, I asked her to serve on my Education Advisory Committee.

A long time resident of Hermosa Beach, Mary Lou has contributed to the community in so many other ways as well. She has served as an advisory member for the Hermosa Beach Chamber of Commerce, coached AYSO boys soccer, and served on the advisory board for the Hermosa Beach Education Foundation. For her active contributions, she was named 1989 Hermosa Beach Woman of the Year.

Of special interest, she has managed several local farmers' markets, making sure the vendors get the space they need and that the markets run smoothly. I have taken advantage of these markets many times—during my campaigns, the farmers' markets have always been a great way to reach a lot of people, and as a member of Congress, my staff and I often bring our office resources to the community by setting up our own booth. Mary Lou not only accommodates these important visits for me, but she is always thoughtful enough to provide flowers and to remember that I like Diet Coke.

Mary Lou also is a tremendous resource to my staff, always available to answer questions about policy, politics, or which vendor has the

best produce. My staff members over the years consider Mary Lou as an additional "mother."

This year, Mary Lou chose not to run for another term as a School Board Trustee in order to apply her years of experience to a run for Hermosa Beach City Council. Although she was not successful in this endeavor, she once again demonstrated her leadership and commitment to the community through the classy way she ran her campaign.

I will miss Mary Lou on the School Board, but I know we will continue to work together to ensure that we do the best we can for the children of our community. I join the citizens of Hermosa Beach in wishing Mary Lou and her family well in their future endeavors.]

DO REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS THWART RELIGIOUS FREEDOM?

**HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 18, 2001*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, the "Helsinki" Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe recently convened a briefing which examined the policies of various governments which require registration of religious groups and the effect of such policies on the freedom of religious belief and practice. There was evidence that such requirements can be, and often are, a threat to religious freedom among countries in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

As Co-Chairman of the Helsinki Commission, mandated to monitor and encourage compliance with the Helsinki Final Act and other OSCE commitments, I have become alarmed over the past decade by the creation of new laws and regulations in some OSCE countries that serve as a roadblock to the free exercise of religious belief. These actions have not been limited to emerging democracies, but include Western European countries such as Austria.

Many of these laws are crafted with the intent to repress religious communities deemed nefarious and dangerous to public safety. One cannot deny that certain groups have hidden behind the veil of religion in perpetrating monstrous and perfidious acts. The September 11th tragedies have been a grim reminder of that. Yet, while history does hold examples of religion employed as a tool for evil, these are exceptions and not the rule. In our own country, during the Civil Rights Movement, religious communities were the driving force in the effort to overturn the immoral "separate but equal" laws and provide legal protections. If strict religious registration laws had existed in this country, government officials could have clamped down on this just movement, possibly delaying long overdue reform.

While OSCE commitments do not forbid basic registration of religious groups, governments often use the pretext of "state security" to quell groups espousing views contrary to the ruling powers' party line.

Registration laws are often designed on the premise that minority faiths are inimical to governmental goals. Proponents of more strenuous provisions cite crimes committed by individuals in justifying stringent registration requirements against religious groups, ignoring