

RESTORING THE LAFAYETTE- ESCADRILLE MEMORIAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, a little over a month ago I brought to the attention of my colleagues the deteriorating state of the Lafayette-Escadrille Memorial, which honors all United States aviators who flew for France in World War I.

On June 17, a wreath laying ceremony will take place at the memorial to commemorate the 85th anniversary of its dedication. Tomorrow I will be introducing a resolution in honor of the 68 Americans who were memorialized or buried on the site and to honor all our fallen aviators of World War I. In addition, the resolution will express support for the funding needed to restore this hallowed site.

In a poster right here, this storyboard depicts the history of the Lafayette-Escadrille and their "Heritage of Valor and Sacrifice." Seven Americans formed the original American squadron. When the Escadrille, which means squadron, transferred to United States command in 1918, 265 American volunteers had served in the French Air Service with 180 of those having flown combat missions. In all, the Escadrille flew 3,000 combat sorties, amassing nearly 200 victories. In fact, the Escadrille became the birth of the United States Air Force.

A joint French-American committee was organized at the end of World War I to locate a final resting place for these American aviators. With the land donated by the French Government, the Lafayette-Escadrille Memorial was dedicated on July 4, 1928. The picture in the middle is the front of the memorial. It encompasses an arch of triumph with a series of columns placed on either side. Indeed, it is a sight to behold.

The memorial also contains a sanctuary and a burial crypt. Sunlight fills the tomb by way of 13 stained glass windows. Each of these works of art depicts the Escadrille flying its many missions over the battlefields of Europe. One of the most striking stained glass works depicts the U.S. aviators, escorted by an eagle, on a symbolic flight across the Atlantic to come to the aid of France.

Sadly, the memorial is in desperate need of repair. The structure sits in a meadow with a high water table. Heavy rains flood the tomb, exacerbated by the poor functioning drains and water leaking through the terrace behind the memorial. Structural repairs are needed for the crypt and the overall foundation, and double glass is needed to protect the remarkable, remarkable stained glass windows.

If we look again at the center, we will see that the front of the memorial is cracked and stained with pollution.

Let me show my colleagues the next poster. This graphic here shows the de-

terioration inside the crypt. The crumbling masonry and stucco and overall structural damage is evident.

Here we can see additional damage on the ceiling. Furthermore, the stained glass windows, like the one we see here, are not protected. These beautiful works of art could be lost forever if the structural deterioration is allowed to continue.

In 1930, U.S. Attorney Nelson Cromwell founded the Lafayette-Escadrille Memorial Foundation. He endowed the foundation with a \$1.5 million trust fund for maintenance, which has all been exhausted. Today, the foundation has a mirror organization in France and a pledge of monetary support to restore this memorial.

Although studies to estimate the cost of restoring the memorial are ongoing, it is obvious that the resources required will exceed the meager means of this foundation. The French Government has already indicated its willingness to assist, and it is time for the United States Government to do the same.

Combining the efforts of private industry and the United States Congress, it is my hope to join the French in restoring the memorial to its original beauty. It is the right thing to do to honor our fallen aviators of World War I and to demonstrate our respect for the sacrifices of all Americans in service to our Nation and our allies.

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join with me in supporting funding for the restoration of this great memorial.

MORE COMPARABLE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FATTAH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Speaker, I take the floor today to, on one hand, compliment the other body which for over 2 days now has debated the legislation that I offered here in the House to create a more comparable education system within our various States.

I want to thank in particular the Senator from the great State of Connecticut, Senator DODD, and Senator BIDEN from Delaware, Senator REED from Rhode Island. I would like to also thank Senator BOXER and a host of other members, Senator CORZINE, and then the colleague who I served on the Web-based Education Commission with, Senator ENZI, who is a Republican Member of the Senate from the State of Wyoming.

I would expect that when the matter is brought for a vote after some more debate this week, there will be a lot of the other Members from the other body that I would want to thank.

But I also have some concern that this legislation, unfortunately, did not get a full hearing here in this House.

The Committee on Rules decided that, when we debated the education bill, that for some reason we were in a rush and that we could not offer amendments to title I as part of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

So even though the House Committee on Education and the Workforce under the leadership of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), my great friend, the majority chairman, gave me the opportunity to testify before the committee and to raise this concern, it was not afforded the opportunity rightfully to be debated and voted on here on the floor of the House.

But let me move to the substance of this matter because I think that we perpetrate a fraud on the Nation to talk about education reform and some discussion about the inequities that exist within our States between poor, rural and urban school districts and their wealthier suburban counterparts, for in almost every State in the Union, there has been and continues to be litigation brought by small, rural and impoverished school districts and large urban districts seeking from their State a fuller share of educational funding, an adequate share.

When we talk about education reform, we talk about testing every child every year in every school as if every child every year and in every school is afforded the same education opportunity. Well, we know that is not the case.

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We know that, for instance, in poorer school districts most of the children are being taught by teachers who are not certified in the subject that they are teaching; that, in fact, in math, in science, in the critical disciplines, that the teachers who are teaching the majority of the students in urban and rural school districts did not major nor minor in the subjects that they are teaching. So we have physical education teachers teaching science, and then we want to come along and test kids and compare them to others.

Now, I see my colleague, the newest of Members from the great State of California, where there has been plenty of litigation on this issue. Look at the example of Beverly Hills High, in which young people have the opportunity to have 23 advanced placement courses offered to them, but at Compton High not one advanced placement course is available to them. How can we create a situation where we are going to look at young people and say they are not performing as well as their counterparts when they are not given the same opportunity?

In Maryland, right next door, we have wide disparities on what is being spent in one district versus another. We have in the city of Baltimore 123 young people who had the opportunity to take AP courses; but in Montgomery County, the wealthiest suburb, 5,000 students had the opportunity to take AP courses.

In Philadelphia, my home, in the great Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the 45 contiguous school districts to the city of Philadelphia spent, on average, \$70,000 more per year per classroom than the city district. Now, how can we have a circumstance in which these young people are going to be able to compete when in the suburban districts class sizes are at 18 and 19 and in the city it is above 30? How can we have a situation where in the Council Rock School District, right near my home outside of Philadelphia, they can spend \$90,000 a year on a teacher and inside the city they can only afford to pay \$30,000 a year for a teacher. How are they going to attract and retain quality teachers?

Then let us talk about curriculum, because the Federal Government has no role in curriculum; States have that responsibility. Our Department of Education says in a study on this matter that only 15 percent of low-income students ever get the opportunity to take algebra, geometry, and the higher-order math. And so, Mr. Speaker, I come today to compliment the other body, to issue a concern about our work here on education reform, and hope we too will have an opportunity in conference to add our voice on this matter.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON). The Chair is constrained by the traditions and rules of the House to remind all Members that remarks in debate in the House may not include characterizations of the work of the Senate.

SAVING SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the President's Social Security commission met for the first time. Last night I stayed up quite late listening to, 10 or 12 of those commission members talk and speak about what they saw as their challenge to try to fix the Social Security problem. I was disappointed, number one, that some of the commissioners apparently were not in attendance; number two, I was disappointed that some of the commissioners appeared not to understand the complexity of the problem facing Social Security and, therefore, facing America.

Social Security is probably one of our most successful programs to help retirees. We are faced with the challenge of keeping Social Security solvent. What I would like to stress is what I displayed on this first chart, and that is the biggest risk is doing nothing at all. Some of the commissioners I heard suggested the dangers

of investing and do not risk Social Security. The problem is that if we do not do something, then we are going to end up increasing payroll taxes and probably also reducing benefits.

The challenge is ahead of us. Social Security has a total unfunded liability of over \$9 trillion. That means we would have to put \$9 trillion today in an investment account, earning at least 2.7 percent interest to accommodate future payments in Social Security. The Social Security Trust Fund contains nothing but IOUs. This is an issue often overlooked when people suggest, look, the problem is not really going to confront us until 2035 or 2036 or 2037 because the trust fund owes Social Security some of that money. The problem is where are we going to come up with those funds 15 years from now, maybe as soon as 12 years from now when there is less Federal payroll tax revenues coming in for Social Security than is needed to pay the promised benefits? That is the challenge.

And that is the point; if we continue to put off this decision, on what I consider the largest financial challenge of this country, we are going to end up with doing a disservice not only to workers by increasing the payroll tax that they pay but also for retirees as future Congresses look to reduce those particular benefits. This will be a huge burden on our kids and our grandkids that this Congress should not abide.

I compliment the President for moving ahead to develop a solution. One of the challenges of the Social Security commission is going to be to inform the American people of the seriousness of this current problem and the fact that the longer we put off a solution the more drastic that solution must be. To keep paying promised Social Security benefits, the payroll tax will have to be increased by nearly 50 percent or benefits will have to be cut by 30 percent.

This chart depicts a little temporary surplus, because we have increased social security taxes so much, by waiting too long for the last Social Security commission in 1983 we have a temporary blip of more money coming in from the Social Security tax than is required to pay benefits. That surplus is going to be depleted someplace between 2011 and 2016, and then we go into deficit spending.

I mentioned \$9 trillion that we need today to put in an investment account to keep Social Security solvent, if you use tomorrow's dollars, what we will need in future dollars over the next 75 years is \$120 trillion to pay benefits, \$120 trillion more than is going to be raised by the current Social Security tax. A serious problem.

I urge these commissioners to attend the meetings. I urge these commissioners not to send staff, but to understand what the Social Security problem is and to give it their all to come up with a reasonable solution.

Personal retirement accounts; a quick comment as I conclude. They do

not come out of Social Security. They become part of the Social Security retirement benefits. A worker will own his or her own retirement account, and it is limited to safe investments that will earn more than the 1.7 percent that is going to be paid by Social Security as a return in the form of benefits on the taxes that the employer and the employee paid in.

And just a final comment. Seventy-five percent of American workers today pay more into Social Security tax than they do into income tax. Again raising taxes should not be an option.

H.R. 1699, COAST GUARD REAUTHORIZATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to a bill that has already passed this House, H.R. 1699, by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LOBIONDO) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN). It had to do with the reauthorization of the Coast Guard budget.

I just returned as a U.S. ambassador from the Federated States of Micronesia; 607 islands stretching across a million miles of ocean. Without the United States Coast Guard, we would have lost many citizens and many visitors.

We found a package of white substance being handled by a group of children on the beach of Yap. We found it to be cocaine. It was the Coast Guard that moved in. Right after that, we found a headless, armless, legless body. A torso. It was the Coast Guard that my embassy called to contact the FBI and DEA to investigate.

We had many, many occasions to call on the Coast Guard for search and rescue. Many of the native boats would go out, and in these shabby craft would end up missing. The motor broke down, the boat came apart, there were high waves. Without the Coast Guard being called in for search and rescue, we would have lost many of our countrymen there in the Federated States of Micronesia.

Boat safety training was something that was done often on the request of the embassy, and we went to the Islands of Chuuk, where we trained 19 young people to go back to their respective islands and to train others to do boat safety.

There were so many occasions on which I had to request the services of the United States Coast Guard. Their services were done courageously, bravely, and effectively, saving the lives and crafts of many, many people, many islanders, but most of all serving our country well and with distinction.

I am very pleased and proud to have my first vote recorded on this particular bill, H.R. 1699. I commend the