

administrations. I worked with him extensively on international aviation passenger and cargo trade matters, as well as domestic aviation matters, in my capacity then as chairman of the Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight and Aviation authorizing subcommittee.

I found Jeff Shane always to be the very model of intellectual integrity; thoroughly knowledgeable on a wide range of issues on which he was called to testify before our committee, well-informed, and, very importantly, a consistently vigilant, vigorous advocate for U.S. aviation interests and a skillful negotiator.

Jeff was the architect of our government's original Open Skies policy to promote competition in our bilateral aviation trade agreements. Under this policy, a great many competitive agreements were negotiated during the first Bush administration, and the Clinton administration continued the policy with great success. The result has been that aviation trade markets in passenger and cargo, in which we once had 30 percent of market share, we now have 60 to 70 percent of market share and are the dominant aviation trade partner.

Jeff Shane's experience extends well beyond aviation to other modes of transportation, as exemplified by a discussion he and I had shortly after the enactment of ISTEA in 1991. Jeff said, "This is one of the most extraordinary, innovative transportation measures ever enacted. It has had the exceptionally beneficial effect of causing all of us at the Assistant Secretary-Policy level to come together, share our thoughts, understand each other's mode of transportation better and to begin thinking, as well as acting, intermodally, something we have long needed to do in this department."

That is an extraordinary observation and admission to make on the part of a policy person in any department, and that reflects the candor with which Jeff approaches his service in the public sector.

Secretary Mineta has said to me several times that he would like Jeff Shane to work to upgrade the department's policy office, and, as he put it, make it a "world-class think tank." We need that. We need that kind of support at the policy level of the Department of Transportation.

Two years ago, I met with Jeff Shane and Charlie Hunnicutt, who had held the Assistant Secretary position during the Clinton Administration, to explore means of upgrading the Department's aviation policy staff, a staff that deals with the most important issues in the department in negotiating international aviation rights for our airlines, providing expert advice to the Department of Justice when the department is considering airline mergers, and carrying out the department's regulatory responsibilities, including predatory practices, computer reservation systems and adequate competition in Internet ticket sales.

It is deplorable that over the past 15 years, the DOT aviation staff has been eroded by budget cutting decisions. The staff has decreased from 166 at the time of the Civil Aeronautics Board sunset in 1985, to fewer than 100 today. Furthermore, as many as half of the staff could well retire in the next few years.

It was a great tribute to Jeff Shane that in his career outside of government, he was concerned about the quality of government service among those who continued in the department. He and I took many opportunities over the past few years to raise awareness on the Hill and within the aviation community of the critical importance of this unique staff, and it is so encouraging to me that Secretary Mineta has recognized the problem and is giving Jeff Shane a mandate to correct it. I can think of no one better to do this, no one better qualified to attract the staff, to inspire that staff and to keep them interested and motivated, than Jeff Shane.

In these perilous post-September 11 times and in the aftermath of enactment of our most recent aviation and transportation security law, DOT needs at the policy level a person with Jeff Shane's experience, intellectual capacity, honesty and openness to new ideas, as well as energy to pursue and implement innovation. Jeff Shane's reentry into public service will produce better transportation policy decisions, to the great benefit of the Nation's economy and to all who use our transportation systems, as well as to the benefit of the Department of Transportation.

This new position is long overdue, much needed, and will serve our country and our transportation policy well. After all, transportation does represent 11 percent of our Nation's gross domestic product. That is \$1.1 trillion, an impact that we must nurture and strengthen, and this legislation will help do that.

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time just to say that one of the treasures and great assets of not only the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, but the Congress is the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR). The remarks that the gentleman just made, going through the entire history of the Department of Transportation, indicate why we rely on him so heavily, and why our committee continues to prosper in a very bipartisan way.

It is thanks to his efforts that I continue to learn from him.

I urge passage of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3441.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NAMING MEMBER AS MAJORITY MANAGER OF TIME ON H.R. 3442, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE PLAN FOR ACTION PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ACT OF 2001

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE) be allowed to manage the floor time on H.R. 3442.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Colorado?

There was no objection.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE PLAN FOR ACTION PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ACT OF 2001

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3442) to establish the National Museum of African American History and Culture Plan for Action Presidential Commission to develop a plan of action for the establishment and maintenance of the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C., and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3442

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "National Museum of African American History and Culture Plan for Action Presidential Commission Act of 2001".

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—There is established the National Museum of African American History and Culture Plan for Action Presidential Commission (hereafter in this Act referred to as the "Commission").

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—The Commission shall consist of not more than 23 members appointed as follows:

(1) The President shall appoint 7 voting members.

(2) The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Senate Majority Leader shall each appoint 6 voting members.

(3) In addition to the members appointed under paragraph (2), the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Senate Majority Leader shall each appoint 2 additional nonvoting members.

(c) QUALIFICATIONS.—Members of the Commission shall be chosen from the following professional groups:

(1) Professional museum associations, including the Association of African American Museums and African American Museum Cultural Complex, Inc.

(2) Academic institutions and groups committed to the research and study of African

American life, art, history, and culture, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities and the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

SEC. 3. FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMISSION.

(a) PLAN OF ACTION FOR ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF MUSEUM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall submit a report to the President and the Congress containing its recommendations with respect to a plan of action for the establishment and maintenance of the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. (hereafter in this Act referred to as the “Museum”).

(2) NATIONAL CONFERENCE.—In developing the recommendations, the commission shall convene a national conference on the Museum, comprised of individuals committed to the advancement of African American life, art, history, and culture, not later than 3 months after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) FUNDRAISING PLAN.—The Commission shall develop a fundraising plan for supporting the creation and maintenance of the Museum through contributions by the American people, and a separate plan on fundraising by the African American community.

(c) REPORT ON ISSUES.—The Commission shall examine and submit a report to the President and the Congress on the following issues:

(1) The availability and cost of collections to be acquired and housed in the Museum.

(2) The impact of the Museum on regional African American museums.

(3) Possible locations for the Museum on or adjacent to the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

(4) The cost of converting the Smithsonian Institution’s Arts and Industries Building into a modern museum with requisite temperature and humidity controls.

(5) Whether the Museum should be located within the Smithsonian Institution.

(6) The governance and organizational structure from which the museum should operate.

(d) LEGISLATION TO CARRY OUT PLAN OF ACTION.—Based on the recommendations contained in the report submitted under subsection (a) and the report submitted under subsection (c), the Commission shall submit for consideration to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives, the Committee on House Administration of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate, and the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and Senate a legislative plan of action to create and construct the Museum.

SEC. 4. ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS.

(a) FACILITIES AND SUPPORT OF SECRETARY OF INTERIOR.—The Secretary of the Interior shall provide the administrative services, facilities, and funds necessary for the performance of the Commission’s functions.

(b) COMPENSATION.—Each member of the Commission who is not an officer or employee of the Federal government may receive compensation for each day on which the member is engaged in the work of the Commission, at a daily rate to be determined by the Secretary of the Interior.

(c) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member shall receive travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in accordance with applicable provisions under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code.

SEC. 5. DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF REPORTS; TERMINATION.

(a) DEADLINE.—The Commission shall submit final versions of the reports and plans required under section 3 not later than 9

months after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) TERMINATION.—The Commission shall terminate not later than 30 days after submitting the final versions of reports and plans pursuant to subsection (a).

SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated \$3,000,000 for activities of the Commission during fiscal year 2002.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURRETTE) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. CLEMENT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURRETTE).

Mr. LATOURRETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3442 establishes the National Museum of African American History and Culture Plan for Action Presidential Commission, which will develop a plan to establish and maintain the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. I want to commend the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) for bringing this legislation to our attention.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS) to further amplify and to explain the purpose of the commission and the ultimate goal of the legislation.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentleman from Ohio, for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, the contributions made by African Americans to our Nation and to our communities need to be not only celebrated, but demonstrated. The legislation we are considering today establishes a Presidential Commission to create a blueprint on how to move forward on a National Museum of African American History and Culture.

African Americans have made countless contributions throughout the history of our country. From the founding of this great Nation, African Americans fought for independence from Great Britain, liberty in the Civil War and equal rights in the peaceful marches of the civil rights movement. As my colleagues are aware, African Americans played a key role in the actual construction of prominent landmarks, such as the White House and the building where we stand today, the United States Capitol.

From language, to art, to science, to technology, to food and music and total spiritual heritage, African Americans have made an extraordinary, indelible mark on American culture and American history.

An African American Museum on the National Mall would be a valuable resource for all Americans, including visitors to our Nation’s Capital. From scholarly research, to school field trips, to lunch hour leisure, its existence would serve a needed purpose by demonstrating the significance of African American history to American history.

I want to thank the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) with the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURRETTE), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY), the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. COSTELLO), and I want to thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS), who has worked tirelessly over the last 12 years to get us to this point on this issue.

This has been a bipartisan effort. It is my hope the importance of this initiative becomes a bicameral focus so we may put this legislation on the President’s desk for his signature.

Mr. Speaker, this is an excellent blueprint for a permanent public exhibition of the history and culture of African Americans. It puts us one step closer toward the reality of a museum that celebrates and demonstrates the achievements, contributions and the lives of Americans of African descent.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and the effort to construct a National Museum as soon as possible.

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation that will establish a Presidential Commission to develop a report for the President and the Congress regarding the establishment of a National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.

Among other issues, the report will address fund-raising, the availability and cost of these collections to be acquired and housed in the museum, possible locations here in the District of Columbia, the cost of converting the Arts and Industries Building owned by the Smithsonian Institute, and the governance and organizational structure of the new museum.

The report will include recommendations on a legislative plan of action, and will be submitted to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, the Committee on House Administration, the Committee on Rules and the Senate. The Committee on Appropriations will also be involved.

Congress can expect to receive the report 9 months after enactment of this bill. Information contained in the report will provide the basis for Congress to make a prudent determination regarding the location, size, budget and construction costs for a world-class museum in our Nation’s Capital.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend my colleagues, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS) for their diligence and determination on this bill. The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) has been a steadfast champion for this innovative program more than a decade. We look forward to receiving the report from the Presidential Commission.

I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS), who walked and marched with Martin Luther King, who has been a real champion in the U.S. House of Representatives, and I have read his book.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. CLEMENT), for yielding me time, from the great City of Nashville, where I had the opportunity to study and to learn much from the people of Tennessee and the people of Nashville.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all of my colleagues for working to bring this bill before us today. I rise today in support of H.R. 3442, the National Museum of African American History and Culture Plan for Action Presidential Commission Act of 2001.

During the past few months, Mr. Speaker, it has been my honor and pleasure to work with my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS), and his staff. I want to take this opportunity to thank the staff of the Subcommittee on Public Buildings and also my own staff for their good work on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, this Commission would develop and recommend a legislative plan of action for creating a national African American museum. It is my hope and prayer that this will finally bring Congress closer to achieving the goal of establishing a national African American museum in our Nation's Capital.

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This Presidential commission is a step, a necessary step in the right direction to preserve the rich history of African Americans.

As I travel across this land, I have been to several local African American museums in such cities as Memphis, Birmingham, Philadelphia, and Detroit. So I believe the time has long passed for a national African American museum right here in our Capitol city, right here in Washington.

I have introduced legislation during every session of Congress since 1988 to authorize a national African American museum. The time has come for passage of this legislation. By establishing this museum and placing it on the national Mall, we will be able to honor the legacy of African Americans and put it in a national light where it belongs.

African American history is an important part of our country; yet the vital and important contributions of African Americans go virtually unrecognized. Until we understand the full African American story, we cannot understand ourselves as a Nation. The African American story must be told and a national African American museum in Washington, D.C. is critical to telling that story.

This Presidential commission is our chance to take an important and productive step in establishing an African American museum and healing our Na-

tion's racial wounds. This is our chance to create an African American community of every individual, an all-inclusive community that is at peace with itself, a beloved community.

Mr. Speaker, the time is right. The time is now.

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), a real spokesperson for all of us on various issues, including this one.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the kind words of the gentleman, and I very much appreciate his yielding me this time and his work on this bill, bringing it forward. I also appreciate the diligent work of the chairman of our Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management.

I especially want to thank the sponsors of this resolution, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS), for moving us forward for the first time with substantial action on a national museum of African American history on the Mall. This bill has been introduced for each of the 11 years I have been in Congress; and it was introduced for years before that, initially by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS).

If I may say a word about the persistence of the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) in introducing this bill. It is one thing to introduce a bill like this, a kind of showcase bill as a freshman Congressman, as he did. It is quite another thing to fight for a bill like this each and every year as he has. The gentleman moved on into the leadership of the Democrats and continued to make this bill a priority, so it is a special tribute to him to have this bill move forward; and I am very pleased that the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS) has joined him to make this a truly bipartisan effort.

Mr. Speaker, this bill has been regularly before the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management. I remember that almost one year I thought we were going to get there. We got a bill actually out of the House to renovate the tower at the Smithsonian to make it the African American museum on the Mall; but the Congress found out that even when we renovate it costs money, and the lack of money is what stopped this bill.

I want to report to the House that there are African Americans ready and willing to contribute funds to build this museum. I have had a very interesting conversation with one such potential contributor; and he said that unless the House took some action that showed there was some hope that this would happen, he would be reluctant to step forward. I think today's action is the kind of action that will encourage contributors to step forward, because the Presidential commission moves the idea forward in two ways. First, it is the first concrete action ever; and in this bill is all of the planning, all of the

logistics. It contains all of the elements that our subcommittee, the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management, requires for monumental buildings. It is all here. All we have to do is do it once the commission finishes its work.

Second, this commission raises the importance of the idea, and I say to my colleagues, important it is. African Americans have been at the very center of the development of our country itself, let alone its history, from our music and all that is unique about American culture, all that is derivative to our most historic structures, including this Capitol building built with the labor of freed blacks and slaves.

Mr. Speaker, there are all manner of museums and monuments in this Capital, all manner of commemorations to events and to people of every kind, and to be kind, I will say many of them obscure. It is astonishing to me that we have entered the 21st century, the third century of our existence as a Nation, with precious few monuments or structures of any kind to commemorate African Americans or African American history. This bill, perhaps, assures that we will not go much longer if we value the history of our country. I thank the sponsors once again.

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) where I used to live.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman for his kind introduction and tell him that there is always a place for him in Texas.

Mr. Speaker, allow me again to thank the distinguished gentleman from Tennessee as well as the chairman of the subcommittee for his leadership and, collectively, the leadership of the ranking member and chairperson of the full Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, knowing their continued concern on issues of, if you will, highlighting and honoring our history. It is important as well to thank the two authors of this legislation as it moves through the House, and that is the establishment of a Presidential commission. One step is a giant step for where we want to take these opportunities to be able to highlight and to reinforce the wonderment of this Nation, and that is that we are built on many shoulders.

The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) is an icon, and I thank him for his persistence and determination. Besides his own leadership in our caucus and on the Committee on Ways and Means, he has taken upon himself to frame for this Congress and this Nation the ability to honor those who have given of their lives to help this country be a better place to live. In his commitment to the Institute of Faith and

Politics, he has educated so many Members of Congress about our civil rights history.

But this particular legislative initiative takes African American history to another level. It chronicles from the very beginning the important role that African Americans have played in this Nation and in nation-building. It is not a legislative initiative that takes us backwards; it is one that moves us forward.

I am very gratified that through a detailed commission we will now have a structure to begin the architectural building, if you will, of how we would create a national museum of African American history. Who will we talk to? What will that story be like? How will it be told? Who will we include, and not to exclude anyone. Where will we reach to in order to make sure that it is an all-comprehensive story of the African American in this Nation?

These are very troubling times. September 11 drew all of us closer together. Now we approach the holiday season when families will be gathered and stories will be told. Will it not be wonderful to be able to come to the United States Capitol in years to come because of the leadership of the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) and the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS), and ultimately from the work of this commission to be able to see the story of a very strong component of our history. This is not to deny the wonderment of the history of those who came across this Nation through Ellis Island or those who may have walked across the border from South America, or maybe those who came in a fishing boat. But what it says of those who came to this Nation in a slave boat have a very special history and now today that story will be told.

Mr. Speaker, I want to again thank the authors of this legislation and the committee for its wisdom in allowing us to debate this legislation, and I hope all of my colleagues will join me in enthusiastically supporting the first step of a very big step in our Nation.

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), our ranking Democrat on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the legislation before us to establish a Presidential commission to develop a plan of action for the establishment and maintenance of the national museum of African American history and culture in Washington, D.C. It is a great tribute to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) that he has worked so diligently and vigorously, in a bipartisan fashion with the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS), to bring this bill to the House floor.

For over a decade, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) has been a persistent and a persuasive advocate for the establishment of a national Af-

ican American museum, support for which is well established and has already been advocated for quite some time going back to the early 1990s by the Smithsonian Institution, which vigorously endorsed the concept of such a museum.

This commission that we are authorizing will supply significant information and data to support the size, the appropriate size of the building, the location, the budget, the extent and type of collection and displays to be managed there. Some of the ideas for the museum include exhibits on the reconstruction era, the Harlem Renaissance, and the Civil Rights movement. We also anticipate that the commission and the museum to be established will work collaboratively with academic institutions to research and study African American life, history, art, and culture, as well as the abominable era of slave trade, which the gentlewoman from Texas alluded to so powerfully in her remarks.

As a part of the initiative we launch today, the Presidential commission will convene a national conference to consider and to include the views and opinions of learned persons who are dedicated to the advancement of African American life. This initiative is long overdue; and I strongly urge not only its support in this House, but swift enactment into law and establishment so that the progress can get quickly underway.

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious issue. We have had some excellent speakers to comment concerning this legislation, and we strongly support it.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of the bill, and I yield back the balance of our time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3442.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the bills H.R. 3282, H.R. 2595, H. Con. Res. 259, H.R. 10, H.R. 3441, H.R. 3442, and H.R. 3370, the legislation just considered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

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ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). The Chair would like to clarify that the request of the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. MCINNIS) was intended merely to transfer to the gentleman from Ohio majority debate time, assuming that another Member had made the motion to suspend the rules. Unanimous consent was not required to permit the Speaker to recognize any Member for a motion to suspend the rules.

KEEPING THE SOCIAL SECURITY PROMISE INITIATIVE

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 282) expressing the sense of Congress that the Social Security promise should be kept.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 282

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring),

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This concurrent resolution may be cited as the "Keeping the Social Security Promise Initiative".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds that—

(1) Social Security provides essential income security through retirement, disability, and survivor benefits for over 45 million Americans of all ages, without which nearly 50 percent of seniors would live in poverty;

(2) Social Security is of particular importance for low earners, especially widows and women caring for children, without which nearly 53 percent of elderly women would live in poverty;

(3) each payday, American workers send their hard-earned payroll taxes to Social Security and in return are promised income protections for themselves and their families upon retirement, disability, or death, and that commitment must be kept;

(4) Social Security payments to beneficiaries will exceed worker contributions to the Social Security trust funds beginning in 2016, as demographics, including the aging baby boom generation and increasing life expectancies, will result in fewer workers per beneficiary and threaten Social Security's essential income safety net with financial instability and insolvency;

(5) deferring action to save Social Security will result in loss of public confidence in the program, will increase the likelihood of spending cuts to other essential programs, and will expose beneficiaries, particularly those with low earnings, to poverty-threatening benefit cuts or reduce workers' take-home pay through burdensome payroll tax increases;

(6) workers' ability to save and invest for their own retirement will continue to be particularly important, especially for younger workers, to enhance their own retirement security; and

(7) the President should be commended for recognizing that Social Security is not prepared to fully fund the retirement of the baby boom and future generations and for establishing the bipartisan President's Commission to Strengthen Social Security, which will report its recommendations this fall.