

and have a long record of opposition to our Nation's premier social insurance program. Let me put this on the record.

Beginning with the original Social Security Act when the ranking minority Republican member of the Committee on Ways and Means was Representative Allen Treadway, a Republican from Massachusetts, he led the attack here in Congress, in the House, offering a motion to delete the old age and unemployment insurance programs and stating that he would vote, and I quote, "most strenuously in opposition to the bill at each and every opportunity."

At that time, 95 of 103 Republicans voted along with Representative Treadway to gut the original act. That was 92.2 percent of the Republicans. But they failed because there were more Democrats that believed that we should lift those in poverty who are seniors to a level at least of subsistence and to dignity in their retirement years.

Now, Republican opposition in the Senate was also pronounced, with a majority of Senate Republicans voting with Senator Hastings to delete the retirement program from the Social Security Act. As we all know, the Act went on to pass both Chambers and was signed into law by Democratic President Franklin Roosevelt on August 14, 1935.

But Republican opposition to Social Security was not limited to the old age and unemployment provisions. In 1956, 38 of 44 Senate Republicans voted against an amendment to restore the disability insurance program to the bill. That was 86½ percent of the Republicans in the Senate not wishing to include the disability insurance provisions, which are the lifeline for millions and millions of people who have been stricken in their families with illness or with injury.

In 1965, when Medicare Part A and B were created, when President Lyndon Johnson was President and led this fight for health care for our seniors, 128 of 165 House Republicans, or 77.6 percent, three-quarters of them, voted to recommit the bill and replace it with, guess what, a voluntary system. Have we heard this before?

Most recently, Republicans have broken their repeated promises, voting seven times on the issue to ensure that, as they say, every penny of Social Security will be locked away in a lockbox. Instead, they have drained the budget, even as we stand here tonight, with tax breaks for the super rich and are plundering the trust funds of Social Security over the next 10 years by nearly \$2 trillion.

So every week I am coming down here to the floor to take a look at the grade on the Social Security trust fund. I call it the debt clock. As of today, Republicans have raided now \$223,945,205,479 from the Social Security trust fund, which averages now about \$796 per American.

Every week since we have come on the floor, that is up over \$6 billion from last week. They keep going into the trust fund to give money away to CEOs like Kenneth Lay, who, believe me, owes us money. The Social Security recipients of this country and the taxpayers owe him nothing.

Democrats believe Social Security is a compact of trust between generations. We will continue to fight against the Republican raid to ensure that Social Security's existence will continue for generations to come. Democrats have always believed in Social Security, and we always will.

CONGRESS HAS AN OBLIGATION TO THE TRAVELING PUBLIC TO SUPPORT AMTRAK

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

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me just say that I am here to discuss Amtrak, but I not only support Amtrak, I have loved the trains ever since I was a little girl. I remember when I was a little girl, the Silver Meteor used to come right by my house. The question that we have in this country is whether or not we support passenger rail.

Let me just say before I get started that there is no form of transportation in this country or anywhere that supports itself. Whether we are talking about the airline industry, whether we are talking about trucks, roads, buses, none of them support themselves. So the question is whether or not we support passenger rail service, or whether we are going to let it fall apart and leave this country's travelers and business people with absolutely no alternative form of public transportation.

Without the \$270 million Amtrak needs to keep operating, we will soon see people that rely on Amtrak to get to their work each day waiting for a train that is not coming.

This Congress absolutely must provide funds to avert a shutdown of Amtrak. We continue to subsidize highways and aviation, but when it comes to our passenger rail service we refuse to provide the money Amtrak needs to survive. This issue is much bigger than just transportation; this is about safety and national security. Not only should we be giving Amtrak the money it needs to continue to provide services, we should be providing security dollars, money to upgrade their tracks and improve safety and security measures in the entire rail system.

Once again, we see the Bush administration's too-little, too-late policy. I am surprised they have not suggested a tax cut to solve this problem. Instead, they are trying to take money from the hard-working Amtrak employees who work day and night to provide top-quality service to their passengers. These folks are trying to make a living for their families, and they do not de-

serve this shabby treatment from this President.

It is time for the administration to step up to the plate and make a decision about Amtrak based on what is good for the traveling public and not what is best for the right wing of the Republican Party and the bean counters at OMB.

I represent Crescent City, Florida, where we recently experienced a tragedy when an Amtrak auto train derailed, killing four and injuring hundreds of others. Soon after that, we experienced another derailment in Gainesville that injured many more.

Florida depends on tourists for its economy, and we need people to be able to get to this State safe so they can enjoy it. Ever since September 11, more and more people are turning from the airlines to Amtrak, and they deserve safe and dependable service.

Some people think that the solution to the problem is to privatize the system. If we privatize, we will see the same thing we saw when we deregulated the airline industries. Only the lucrative routes will be maintained, and routes to rural locations, I say to Members who represent rural areas, will be too expensive and too few. In other words, they will cut these areas out if we privatize it.

Mr. Speaker, I was in New York shortly after September 11 when the plane leaving JFK crashed into the Bronx. I, along with many of my colleagues in both the House and Senate, took Amtrak back to Washington.

This isn't about fiscal policy, this is about providing a safe and reliable public transportation system that the citizens of this Nation need and deserve. Let's stop this crisis now, before it is too late.

Mr. Speaker, we have an obligation to the traveling public to support Amtrak.

Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of providing Amtrak a loan guarantee or supplemental funding in order to keep our national rail system from shutting down. Since 9/11, many travelers have opted to use rail transportation as an alternative to flying. A shutdown would cause serious disruptions for commuters and travelers nationally, and to local economies across America.

Amtrak is critical to my constituents in Kansas City and to the people of Missouri. Missouri has four Amtrak trains: two Missouri Mules that travel between Kansas City and St. Louis and the two Ann Rutledge trains that travel between Kansas City, St. Louis, and Chicago. These trains are integral to tourism and commerce in our state.

This year, the Kansas City station has had approximately 60,000 passengers, the St. Louis station has had over 74,000, the Jefferson City station has had more than 41,000, Hermann's station has had over 11,000, and the Warrensburg station has had 11,000 plus passengers.

Amtrak has proven to be an extremely convenient method of transportation for the business traveler. Missouri state officials commute on the train to work at the State Capitol in Jefferson City. Many Missouri business travelers

commute between Kansas City to St. Louis to avoid airport and highway congestion. This rail system has played a significant role in helping reduce congestion at Lambert International Airport in St. Louis by providing routes from Kansas City to St. Louis and throughout the Midwest.

The stop in Warrensburg Amtrak station provides an affordable transportation route for Central Missouri State University students from across the state. This station also provides 10,000 military personnel and civilians access to Whiteman Air Force Base which maintains the Air Force's premier weapon system, the B-2 bomber.

Individuals traveling on the Missouri routes are able to visit many sites including the: restored historic Kansas City Union Station, Truman Presidential Museum in Independence, American Jazz Museum in Kansas City, Missouri State Capitol and Governor's Mansion in Jefferson City, Hermann's wineries and famous Oktoberfest activities, Lewis and Clark Territory, and the restored St. Louis train station by the landmark Arch.

Amtrak has been forced to run a national system with insufficient financial support since its creation. Approving \$200 million in emergency funding is essential and timely. The federal government has provided subsidies for all modes of transportation including our nation's airports, highways, riverways, and buses. No comparable national passenger rail system in the world has operated without subsidies, and no system has ever succeeded without substantial public capital investment. I urge my colleagues to support emergency funding for Amtrak in order to maintain and reform America's national passenger rail system.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, we're not talking about tracks, or trains, or rails, or stations—we're talking about people—their jobs, their families, their lives. And I am sick of people playing politics with it. In a modern nation, in the greatest nation on Earth, passenger rail service is not a luxury, it's a necessity for the millions of people who use it to get to work, to get to clients, to create new business, to meet friends, to see family, to take a vacation, to enjoy the Holidays.

America needs reliable, affordable, efficient rail service—for all these reasons. All over the world, passenger rail service is a comfortable, popular, reliable mode of transportation, especially between cities that are two to four hours apart—like Paris and London, Tokyo and Osaka, and New York and Washington. The same should be true of travel between cities like Orlando and Miami, Atlanta and Charlotte, Chicago and St. Louis, and Los Angeles and San Diego.

At a time when roads are increasingly clogged, when air travel is strained, wisely investing in rail service is the right thing to do, and the smart thing to do. But this Administration has been asleep at the switch—and if Amtrak fails, if we lose passenger rail service, it will be because this Administration didn't think it was important enough—tell that to the parents who won't be able to get to work to support their families; tell that to the businesses that won't be able to get to their clients; tell that to the grandchild who won't be able to get to her grandmother's house; and tell that to the union worker who loses his or her benefits.

As of last year, Amtrak employed 1,736 people in my state. Almost 4 million people

from my state rode Amtrak last year—and 80 thousand daily commuters ride New Jersey Transit, that would be effectively shut down if the signaling and operators that Amtrak provides are closed.

The passenger rail system in my state, my region, and our country provides hubs of job creation, commercial development, and commerce, especially in revitalized urban centers and smaller communities between major cities without an airport or other means of mass distance travel. The loss of commerce for even a single day closing would be enormous—and in some cases devastating.

So I say again: we're not talking about tracks and trains, we're talking families and towns and cities and livelihoods. Amtrak is not some disembodied entity—it's an integral part of the communities it serves. We need immediate action, and we need it now, but we also need this Administration to start getting serious about a real, long-term solution that ensures the smooth continuation of passenger rail service—not just a rehash of the Amtrak Reform Council's proposal to largely privatize the system and separate infrastructure ownership from operations, which has been tried and failed elsewhere. Besides, the nation's railroads are adamantly opposed to giving other entities the access rights to their tracks that Amtrak currently has. So to the Administration I would say: get serious and start dealing with reality.

We need this Administration to be involved not just when we are at a crisis point—not just days before the system could go under—we need long-term thinking, long-term planning, and a real commitment to make sure America has the passenger rail service it deserves.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, many of my colleagues have spoken about the importance of Amtrak to the Northeast Corridor, or to the small towns throughout the country that do not have access to air travel. However, Amtrak is equally important to Michigan and the Midwest, where it provides competition to the airlines and links major cities, alleviating congestion on roads and in airports.

Americans have chosen to ride Amtrak at increasing rates. Between 1996 and 2001, systemwide ridership grew from 19.7 million to 25.3 million. Last year, Amtrak served over 500,000 people in Michigan, many of whom are my constituents. It is important that Congress let President Bush know that Amtrak must be kept running.

Passenger rail service should not be stopped in its tracks, especially as riders begin to receive the benefits of Amtrak's roll out of high-speed service. Amtrak owns 96 miles of track in Michigan in the Detroit-Chicago high-speed corridor. Amtrak, the Federal Railroad Administration, the State of Michigan and private industry have invested in upgrading this corridor. The ultimate goal of this high-speed project is to reduce the total time between Detroit and Chicago from the current 6 hours to 3 and one-half hours. In January 2002, 90 mile-per-hour service began on a segment of the Amtrak owned right-of-way. Additional speed increases over the entire length of the Amtrak-owned line are planned for later this year. This is the first significant increase in passenger rail speed above 80 miles per hour outside the Northeast in 20 years.

Amtrak has been woefully underfunded since it was created in 1971. The Bush Administration has continued this unfortunate leg-

acy, proposing \$500 million for Amtrak for FY 2003 when it needs \$1.2 billion. This is unacceptable and would only continue to allow Amtrak to wither on the vine.

President Bush's recent proposal that Amtrak make a quick profit and be spun off to private corporations is a nonstarter. First, no passenger rail service in the world—including every subway system—operates without subsidies. Second, Amtrak was created because the private railroads asked that they no longer be required to operate passenger rail service because it was unprofitable. If passenger rail service was not profitable for railroads to run three decades ago, I do not see how it could be profitable now.

The American people deserve an alternative to driving and flying. If the President refuses to lead, Congress must step in and keep the trains running on time.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, Amtrak is an institution that we must preserve. Now is not the time to turn our backs, and deny the emergency aid that we need to keep this service running. Amtrak officially began service on May 1, 1971, when Clocker no. 235 departed New York's Penn Station at 12:05 a.m. bound for Philadelphia. This very same route is traversed by Amtrak trains several times daily, transporting thousands of passengers who depend on this service.

Mr. Speaker, as you well know, Amtrak has announced the imminent shut-down of operations to begin in one week. Amtrak is our national passenger rail service. I have joined the effort by signing a letter to the Appropriators asking for \$200 million in supplemental appropriations in order to keep Amtrak in business. Were Amtrak to shut down, the consequences would be far more widespread than merely affecting long-range service. This shut down would be disastrous to commuters, as such commuter lines as Virginia Railway Express and MARC in the Washington DC area, and Shoreline East in Connecticut, all operate on Amtrak tracks and use Amtrak crews.

Each day, 60,000 passengers travel on Amtrak, and 24,000 travel between New York and Washington, DC alone. The entire Northeast Corridor would be crippled by a shutdown of Amtrak service.

Mr. Speaker, when service first began in 1971, Amtrak had merely 25 employees. Today, Amtrak provides employment for over 24,000 workers. Amtrak's future is an issue that must be resolved. Mr. Speaker, we in Congress must be adamant about guaranteeing to Amtrak that we will not let it fall. Congress must also resolve to adopting a long-term strategy of reform for our nation's passenger rail system. Congress must be sure that Amtrak can continue maintaining, and upgrading its fleet of trains. A quick fix cannot be misconstrued as being a long-term answer.

Mr. Speaker, I do not stand alone when I say America needs Amtrak. Yes, we need a strong and reliable passenger rail system. With improvement, Amtrak would be much cheaper to maintain than constructing new airports and highways. Rail stations, are far more environmentally friendly than airports, and putting more cars on our highways. Terminating Amtrak will mean a serious loss to metropolitan areas as New York and Chicago. The loss of train service will lead to increased automobile traffic into downtown areas from the suburbs. Passenger rail service is very important to maintaining and improving pollution levels. Without commuter rail service, the number

of cars that already pack New York City's crowded streets would greatly increase.

Pollution and transportation are not issues limited to the northeastern corridor. These are national issues, as well. Amtrak is also a national issue. People all over the country ride on the passenger rail service Amtrak provides.

Mr. Speaker, Amtrak is worth maintaining. We must also recognize that it is in Congress's power to step in and fix this problem.

Mr. Speaker, this issue needs our attention and it needs it now. Congress must pass an aid package that gives Amtrak the tools not only to survive, but also to excel.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5010, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2003

Mrs. MYRICK, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 107-536) on the resolution (H. Res. 461) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5010) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2003, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5011, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2003

Mrs. MYRICK, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 107-537) on the resolution (H. Res. 462) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5011) making appropriations for military construction, family housing, and base realignment and closure for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2003, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Mrs. MYRICK, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 107-538) on the resolution (H. Res. 463) providing for consideration of motions to suspend the rules, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

THE SKYROCKETING COST OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. THURMAN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. THURMAN. Mr. Speaker, tonight we have a group of women here who are very concerned about the prescription drug benefit that we may be

voting on this week and with some particular interest in the high cost and skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY), who is a valuable member to our caucus and has been actively involved in the area of prescription drugs.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for yielding to me, who has been such a great leader on an issue that is so important to the 39 million people who are on Medicare. Those are the elderly and persons with disabilities.

A lot of times we come to the floor and we talk about people that are in our districts or people that we have heard about or issues that affect some segment of our society, but not so often do we come to the floor and talk about a problem that affects so many people that also directly impacts our own families.

The issue of the high cost of prescription drugs is hard to escape from, regardless of the income or the position of one's family. I found, much to my surprise, sometime ago that my family was not immune from this particular crisis.

One day I got an e-mail from a cousin of mine that said, "The reason I am writing you today, I saw you on C-SPAN giving a speech on prescription drugs." He said, "I thought you would be interested in my mom's story." This is also my cousin, his mother.

"The last couple of years of my dad's life, he was relying heavily on all sorts of heart medication and other prescription drugs to keep him going and maintain a quality of life."

□ 1930

Well, Mom kept on putting those drugs on their credit cards. How else were they going to pay for them? With Social Security? I do not think so.

Well, anyway Mom did everything she could to make sure Dad got his meds. When Dad passed away in January 1998, Mom was left with a mountain of credit card debt. The Tuesday after his funeral, she had to declare bankruptcy. It just does not seem fair. But if you ask Mom, she would do it all over again to have a few more days with Dad.

As we the baby boomers get older and the cost of prescription drugs is skyrocketing, something needs to be done to curb the drug companies. It cannot all be for recouping R and D. Somebody is gouging somebody.

This e-mail was sent to me almost exactly 2 years ago today. And at that time there was not a candidate running for office, particularly for Federal office, who was not promising that something was going to be done about this high cost of prescription drugs. Oh, yes, elect me and I will go to the White House or I will go to the Congress and I will pass a prescription drug benefit for senior citizens. Do not worry, sen-

iors. Vote for me and I will get you a prescription drug benefit. There was not anybody running for any office at the Federal level that did not say that.

Well, those seniors, people in our own families, are still waiting in line for that prescription drug benefit. We are almost through an entire session of Congress, and there still is not a prescription drug benefit. They have been bumped out of their place in line by the airlines who we bailed out a very short time after September 11. They have been displaced from their place in line by a very few rich dead people when we excused them from the estate tax. And now as the front of the line appears closer and closer, maybe they are getting there, what they are offered up by the Republicans is a sham and not a plan, a bill that was written by the drug companies and for the drug companies that does nothing to control the high cost of prescription drugs, provides no guaranteed benefit, there is no predictable premium or copayment, no guarantee even that any insurance company will even offer them the chance to purchase a plan.

A former member, Bill Gradison, who was president of the Health Insurance Association of America from 1993 to 1998, criticized the GOP private market approach to prescription drug coverage saying, "I am very skeptical that 'drug only' private plans would develop."

So even those people who are associated with the insurance industry think that there is not going to be such a plan available. That is what the Republicans have offered up.

The Democrats on the other hand, we have a plan that does provide a guaranteed benefit, that is absolutely going to lower the cost of prescription drugs, will lower the cost by enabling the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate a lower price for senior citizens, that says that all the beneficiaries of Medicare, our group just like an HMO or the Veterans Administration, and they will negotiate a lower price for senior citizens, and lower the amount of out-of-pocket costs.

But women, women are the ones who are most affected, that are most hurt by the high cost of prescription drugs just like my cousin was who had to declare bankruptcy. Out-of-pocket spending on prescription drugs by seniors is the single largest out-of-pocket health care component after premium payments.

Older women spend more out of pocket on prescription drugs on average than do older men regardless of the type of supplemental insurance coverage they have. Women on Medicare without supplemental benefits spend almost 40 percent more on prescription drugs than men, and men are spending too much. Older women are less likely than men to have employer-sponsored prescription drug coverage. Women without drug coverage spend more out of pocket on drugs than men. On average older women fill more prescriptions than men each year regardless of