

Salt Lake City, Utah, in the words of a Washington Post writer, is the "nice" capital of the world.

Mr. Speaker, not only did my home State shine in its hosting of the Winter Olympics, U.S. Olympians took home an unprecedented number of medals, 34 in all, placing a close second to Germany with 35 medals. The previous U.S. record for winter games was 13 medals. I commend our U.S. Olympic team for their tremendous showing. Furthermore, since the horrendous attacks on our country on September 11, United States citizens and the international community as a whole approached the 2002 Winter Olympic games with some trepidation. Thanks to the united efforts of thousands of Federal, State, local law enforcement and National Guard personnel, the Olympic games went off without a single incident.

Unfortunately, some in the press viewed the Olympics as a prime opportunity to take potshots at my home State and the predominant religion. Gladly, they were loudly renounced by our international visitors. Even the editors of their papers were compelled to apologize for their off-color remarks.

To the gentleman who writes for the Denver Post who took a shot at the State of Utah and then later apologized, he said that our areas out there were for beginners. He has never gone down Grizzly. Grizzly is where the downhill is and Grizzly has a sign up there that says: "Know your limitations. If you can't make this, take your skis, get on the gondola and go back down."

I used to ski, Mr. Speaker; but as I look at that, it is a 77 percent drop. You are doing 85 miles an hour in 300 feet. I have talked to a lot of the Olympians who said, "That's the best men's downhill in the world." To Mr. Paige from the Denver Post who has a perfect right under the first amendment to blast all of us, I have talked to the president and owner of Snowbasin. He said, "I have two tickets for Mr. Paige." We invite Mr. Paige to come to this beginners hill and for him to go straight down that hill. We do not want any of this back and forth stuff. We want a heebent for election straight on down.

I am sure the local TV people would find it very interesting to watch him do it, and we would love to have Mr. Paige come out. We offer him those free tickets to come out and see it.

Mr. Speaker, I did not realize the custom is to ring a cow bell during the Olympics and cow bells were ringing everywhere. It was a wonderful experience for America. It reenergized us. We could see something we felt good about. It was emotional. The opening ceremony was wonderful. The closing ceremony was tremendous. The Olympians were great. I cannot think of a better Olympics that ever occurred. I agree with all the people who said that this was the best one ever.

SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge a full and fair debate on Social Security. Three months ago, the President's commission issued a report. It called for sweeping changes to the Social Security system. It called for the creation of private accounts. It called for three plans to meet these goals. Then last week, in a speech to the Cato Institute, the majority leader urged a debate on this issue. He urged us to reform Social Security. He urged us to privatize Social Security. And the President of the United States argued the same in speeches also delivered last week. Yet in Congress, Republicans are refusing to have that full and fair debate on their schemes of privatization. Do they have something to hide?

We hear that soon we are going to get a proposal to send certificates out to seniors, at a cost of \$14 million, that tells them that if you are over the age of 62, your benefits will never be cut. The first question is, What if you are under 62? What should they assume? We are also told that CRS and other agencies have said that there is no legal effect to this document. It is not anything that anybody can rely on. Jo Anne Barnhart, the Social Security commissioner, suggests that the plan would drain millions of dollars from the administration's fund and alarm seniors who did not get their certificates. I could not agree with her more. The certificate idea is a political exercise that will squander taxpayer time and taxpayer money. It will create confusion. And it is an insult to seniors who put their faith and trust in Social Security.

We do not need a secret plan on Social Security. We do not want people to go into the voting booth and elect candidates next fall who say, "Oh, I'm going to guarantee your Social Security benefits," and then turn around the day after the election and cut their benefits in some scheme of privatization.

I am not afraid to stand on this floor and fight for my beliefs. I say to my Republican colleagues, in the words of the old hymn, "be not afraid." That hymn says that if you believe in something and you care about it, you ought to go ahead without fear. I want a debate on this issue before the election, not after the election. If Republicans fail to put Social Security on the floor, I intend to mount a discharge petition to bring up the Presidential commission's plans so that we can have a full and free debate, the House of Representatives at its best.

I think it is essential. Social Security is at the heart of our retirement security system. Thanks to Social Security, millions of Americans avoid poverty. They have lived their lives free from fear. People with disabilities and surviving family members have put

food on the table because of Social Security. They have roofs over their heads. For 67 years, Social Security has been there for the people of this country when they have needed it.

My mother is 94 years old. She lives in an independent-living facility in St. Louis, and about half the costs of that facility every month come from her Social Security. You better believe she cares about Social Security. And you better believe I care about Social Security. And you better believe that millions of Americans care about Social Security. And you better believe that there are millions of people out there who care about Social Security and are concerned and rightly concerned about secret Republican plans to wait until after the election to put forward plans that will cut their benefits.

We are not talking about an academic exercise here. We are talking about people's lives and what happens to them every month. We are talking about the biggest changes in the program that the President has proposed in the history of the program. We are talking about a sea change in the way this program works. The Republican Party has always sought to weaken Social Security. In 1935, they voted against it. In 1964, they wanted to make it voluntary. And in 1994, Representative ARMEY appeared on national television admitting that "I would never have created Social Security."

Today, the Republican slogan seems to be, "Save Social Security last, not first." In today's New York Times, Paul Krugman is dead on. His argument is that Social Security has never been a simple pension fund. It really, he says, is a social contract. Each generation pays taxes that support the previous generation's retirement and expects to receive the same treatment from the next generation. Republicans propose to allow younger workers to place their payroll taxes in private accounts, in effect to break this ongoing contract, in Krugman's words.

He says, we are left with two options: make room for the trillions diverted into private accounts by slashing baby boomer benefits, or use money from other, unidentified sources to replace the diverted funds. The Republican plan makes promises that sound too good to be true, because they are too good to be true. According to Krugman, private accounts will create a financing crisis requiring sharp benefit cuts or large infusions of money from unspecified sources, or both.

Republicans say privatization will not cost a dime. The Social Security actuaries say it will drain \$20 trillion from the budget. Republicans say privatization will strengthen people's retirement security. Tell that to the employees at Enron. They cannot even pay the cost of health care for their kids. Republicans say that 40 years of neglect have permanently damaged Social Security's financial health, in the words of Majority Leader ARMEY. Bob

Ball, an expert on the subject, calls this statement flat out untrue.

Our challenge is to strengthen Social Security into the future. We need to honor our commitments. We need to strengthen the trust funds. We need to save Social Security first. America had a golden opportunity about 15 months ago. Fifteen months ago, we could have passed tax cuts to promote long-term economic growth while paying down the national debt and investing in Social Security for Americans everywhere. Republicans rejected our approach. Today, the President's budget breaks pledges by both parties. Both parties promised to safeguard the trust funds. The President's budget invades them for the next 10 years. It drains \$1.5 trillion from the trust funds, and plans proposed by his commission fail to explain how we will pay for privatization. And they will lead to cuts in benefits for seniors, even for individuals opting out of private accounts.

This is not a debate about numbers. It is a debate in the end about our values. What is the value we place on Social Security? Our values call for understanding that Social Security will be solvent for the next 36 years, at a minimum. Our values call for recognizing that people have faith and trust and confidence in our most respected program. Our values call for realizing that Social Security offers economic security not just to seniors but to widows, disabled Americans, and children of parents who die before the age of 65. Our values call for keeping our intergenerational contract and commitment in the 21st century.

□ 1845

Our values call for keeping our word to the seniors of this country. Our values call for investing in Social Security today, not tearing it down as baby-boomers retire a few years from now.

I urge Republicans, be not afraid. Let us get about having a real debate before the voters speak in November of this year. Let us get about the task of saving Social Security first and today.

BREAKING THE CONTRACT

(By Paul Krugman)

If converting Social Security to a system of private retirement accounts is such a good idea, why can't advocates of that conversion try, just once, to make their case without insisting that 1+1=4?

Last week George W. Bush did it again, contrasting Social Security benefits with what retiring workers would have if they had invested all the Social Security taxes in the stock market instead. As an article in *The Times* pointed out, this was a misleading scenario even on its own terms; financial planners strongly advise against investing solely in stocks, and a diversified retirement account wouldn't have risen nearly as much in the 1990's bull market.

But there's something much more serious wrong with Mr. Bush's story. Indeed, the latest remarks perfectly illustrate how he uses bogus comparisons to make private accounts sound like a much better idea than they really are. For by emphasizing what today's 65-year-olds could have done if they hadn't paid Social Security taxes, Mr. Bush has for-

gotten something rather important. Without those taxes, who would have paid for their parents' benefits?

The point is that when touting its plan to privatize Social Security, the Bush administration conveniently fails to mention the system's existing obligations, the debt it owes to older Americans. As with so many other administration proposals, private accounts are being sold with deceptive advertising.

The truth—which Mr. Bush's economists understand perfectly well—is that Social Security has never been run like a simple pension fund. It's really a social contract: each generation pays taxes that support the previous generation's retirement, and expects to receive the same treatment from the next generation.

You may believe that Franklin Roosevelt should never have created this system in the first place. I disagree, but in any case Social Security exists, and older Americans have upheld their end of the bargain. In particular, baby boomers have spent their working years paying quite high payroll taxes, which were used mainly to support their elders, and only secondarily to help Social Security build up a financial reserve. And they expect to be supported in their turn.

Mr. Bush proposes to allow younger workers to place their payroll taxes in private accounts—in effect, to break this ongoing contract. But then what happens to older workers, who have already paid their dues?

There are only two possibilities. One is default: make room for the trillions diverted into private accounts by slashing the baby boomers' benefits. The other is to buy the baby boomers out—that is, to use money from other sources to replace the diverted funds.

Those really are the only alternatives. Last year the special commission on reform of Social Security, which was charged with producing a plan for private accounts, came to an ignominious end—it issued a deliberately confusing report, then slunk quietly out of town. But wade through its menu of options, and you'll find that in the end the commission grudgingly rediscovered the obvious: Private accounts won't "save" Social Security. On the contrary, they will create a financing crisis, requiring sharp benefit cuts, large infusions of money from unspecified outside sources, or both.

But nervous Republican members of Congress want to send all Social Security recipients a letter (at government expense, of course) assuring them that their benefits will never be cut. And now that the magic budget surplus has turned back into a pumpkin, the government is in no position to infuse new money into Social Security—on the contrary, the government at large is now borrowing from Social Security at a furious pace.

So why is the Bush administration reviving its push for private accounts right now? Did it really learn nothing from the implosion of the reform commission? I doubt it; the administration's economists aren't fools, though loyalty often requires that they pretend otherwise.

A more likely interpretation is that this is entirely cynical. War frenzy is subsiding, the Bush domestic agenda is stalled, and early indications for the November election aren't as good as Karl Rove expected. So it's fantasy time: tantalize the public with visions of sugarplums, then blame Democrats for snatching the goodies away. And it doesn't matter that the numbers don't add up, because the plan will never be tested by reality.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Under a previous order of the

House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LIPINSKI addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CELEBRATING THE 167TH BIRTHDAY OF THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I come to the House floor tonight to talk about a special day that happened last Saturday in Texas. March 2, 2002, marked the 167th birthday of the Republic of Texas.

Long ago on that date, in 1836, 54 delegates representing settlements across Texas gathered for the Constitutional Convention of 1836 in the small Village of Washington-on-the-Brazos.

From the beginning, it was an event marked by haste and urgency. The army forces of Mexico under General Santa Anna were closing in on the defenders in the Alamo. On March 2nd, the day after the opening of the convention, the delegates declared the independence of Texas from Mexico.

Within days of that announcement, on March 6th, the Alamo would fall. This was the first in a chain of defeats for the small Texas Army which would, nevertheless, emerge victorious at the battle of San Jacinto, 6 weeks later, on April 21.

Mr. Speaker, what those brave Texans were fighting for is the same thing we are fighting for today. Up to the point when they gathered at Washington-on-the-Brazos, it was simply to restore the Mexican Republic and the constitution of 1824, which had been suspended by General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. This constitution had granted all citizens and subjects of Mexico basic human rights.

On the night of March 1, however, a group of five men stayed up late at night drafting the document that would be approved the next day by the full convention. This document, which echoed the lines of its American counterpart, was the Texas Declaration of Independence.

It started off in much the same way as ours, with the words, "When a government has ceased to protect the lives, liberty and property of the people." It spoke of the numerous injustices inflicted upon the settlers of the state then known as Coahuila y Tejas: the elimination of the state's legislative body; the denial of religious freedom; the elimination of civil justice system; and the confiscation of firearms, this last one being the most intolerable, particularly among Texans.

Finally, it stated that, because the injustices of Santa Anna's government, Texans were severing their connection with the Mexican nation and declaring themselves a free, sovereign and independent republic, fully invested with