

that no American will ever receive less from Social Security than is promised by the current program. And we want to put that in writing, and we want it put it down in a plan that will last.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DEMINT. I will yield to the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Just to emphasize the point, we talk about the magic of compound interest. I paid my grandson to come in and paint the fence. And I said, Look, will you put this \$36 in a Roth IRA? He said, Geez, Grandpa, I want to put this in an account and buy a car with it when I am old enough. So I explained to him, Look, if you put this \$36 in an IRA it doubles almost every 8 years. So I figured it out and projected it out so at age 65 he had \$70,000 that that money would be worth because of the magic of compound interest; and if he waited another 7 years to age 72, then it would be worth \$140,000. He said, Gosh, Grandpa, that is good; but could I just put most of it towards the car and a little bit towards the Roth IRA?

So the magic of compound interest is what can make today's workers that are modest or median income retire as rich people. That is what we are trying to do is having something more than just Social Security but promise the Social Security, but then have the opportunity with the magic of compound interest to have retirees gain even more in their retirement years.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, although I do think he should have paid his grandson more than \$36. But he makes an excellent point. If Americans knew that even the poorest worker, if we start now for those in their 20's and 30's, they will all have several hundred thousand dollars that is theirs that can be turned into a monthly income for their own retirement security, but even more importantly, to have some additional income for their retirement, to pay off a house, to help children or grandchildren. We need to help the poor of America develop wealth that they can pass on to the next generation and Social Security is that only opportunity.

We have plans to help them save more and at the same time guarantee that their retirement income will always be as much or more than the current Social Security system.

This has been a great start to the discussion. You will hear more from the Republicans because it is the Republicans that have the plans, and it is the Republicans that will tell you the truth.

SOCIAL SECURITY, WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH, AND PREVENTING RECIDIVISM

THE SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TIBERI). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I must confess that I have been intrigued with some of the discussion that has taken place relative to Social Security and what we need to do with it. And I count myself as one of those who believe that our Social Security system, which was actually developed and generated by Democrats, a Democratic President, of course, undergirded much of it; and, of course, Democrats want to preserve and protect it.

I am one of those who believe that at all costs we must, in fact, protect and preserve our Social Security system as we have known it. But that is not what I really came to talk about this evening. As a matter of fact, I have two things that I am going to discuss.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Last month we praised our forefathers as we observed President's Day, and this month is Women's History Month. And as it gets underway, I want to recognize some of the outstanding women; women who dared to be first; women who strove for equality and social justice; women who not only broke ceilings but shattered spheres in pursuit of rights that should have been inalienable at the time, and whose contributions continue to pave the way and continue to inspire others.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, as you know I am from Chicago, a city that is rich in women pioneers and trailblazers in both the past and the present. One such woman that I would like to mention is Ida B. Wells, who founded the first black female suffrage club in Illinois as well as the first kindergarten in a black neighborhood.

Ida B. Wells was born in 1862, was a slave for the first 6 months of her life, and spent the remainder of her life fighting for civil and economic rights for African Americans and for others. Declaring that one had better die fighting against injustice than die like a dog or rat in a trap, Wells crusaded against lynching and segregation until her death in 1931.

Another outstanding Chicagoan and another outstanding pioneer in the suffrage movement was labor activist Sylvia Woods, who was a pioneer in civil rights, a woman that I got an opportunity to actually know. During World War II she held the union organization drive at Bendix Aviation. She spent much of the 1940's organizing the United Auto Workers Local 330 and formulating the UAW resolution against sex discrimination. Following the war, she assisted women who were laid off in Chicago and co-founded the National Alliance Against Racism.

However, at present there are future history makers who are also making a tremendous impact on the lives of citizens in Chicago and throughout the Nation. Exemplary individuals from today include Reverend Addie Wyatt, Reverend Willie Taplin Barrow, Dr. Johnnie Coleman, and Ms. Mamie Bone, as well as a number of others.

Reverend Addie Wyatt has the distinction of having had active involve-

ment with the three major movements of the 20th century: labor, civil rights, and women's rights. Her leadership roles in labor were the international vice president of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, and she broke ground as the first female local union president of the United Packing House Food and Allied Workers and as international vice president of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America.

One of the most eloquent spokespersons I have ever heard, Addie Wyatt also played a founding role in Operation Breadbasket and Operation PUSH, as well as her work with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., illustrates her commitment to civil rights.

Her involvement in the women's movement has also generated a number of worthy achievements. Reverend Wyatt is a founding member of the National Organization of Women and in the early days was appointed by Eleanor Roosevelt to serve on the Labor Legislation Committee of the Commission on the Status of Women. During her distinguished career, she advised Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Carter and other important leaders on these causes.

She and her husband, Reverend Claude Wyatt, currently serve as pastors emeritus of the Vernon Park Church of God in Chicago, which they helped to develop and which stands as a monument to their tremendous religious and spiritual leadership.

Reverend Dr. Willie Taplin Barrow is the co-chair of Rainbow/PUSH Coalition. She is well known for breaking barriers in a male-dominated profession. She is an ordained minister and on the Governor's Committee on the Status of Women in Illinois. She is a member of the Democratic National Committee, is a dynamic preacher and inspirational speaker, and travels all over the world motivating, stimulating, activating people to realize their own potential for not only self-sufficiency, but the potential that they have to help shape and mold the society of which they are a part.

Almost any Saturday morning you can encounter Reverend Barrow at Operation PUSH where she co-leads that organization along with its founders, the Reverend Jessie Jackson.

Another fine citizen of Chicago is Reverend Dr. Johnnie Coleman, sometimes referred to as the first lady of the religious community. She is the founding minister of Christ Universal Church where 4,000 people go to hear her words of wisdom and healing every Sunday.

□ 1645

To her credit, Reverend Coleman has several organizations in Chicago; the Universal Foundation for Better Living, Incorporated, the Johnnie Coleman Institute, and the Johnnie Coleman Academy, as well as a book of teachings entitled "Open Your Mind and Be Healed."

Also, an outstanding minister is Reverend Jennie Pettis, who is the founder and pastor of the Family Altar Evangelistic Church. In a relatively short period of time, the Reverend Pettis and her parishioners have built a brand new edifice, which they expect to inhabit during the spring of this year.

Chicago is a magnificent city, a tremendous city. I represent a Congressional District that is one of the most diverse in the Nation. It includes downtown Chicago, the Gold Coast, the Magnificent Mile, outstanding museums and universities, 23 hospitals, 4 medical centers, 4 medical schools, almost anything that one can imagine. But also in that landscape, of course, I represent Chinatown, I represent Greek Town, I represent what is called Little Italy, a great Italian community, and I represent the Ukrainian Village.

I also represent a large percentage of the public housing in Chicago, more than 68 percent; and as the chairperson of the Central Advisory Council, Ms. Mamie Bone fights for the residents of public housing. She currently serves as a member of the CHA Board of Commissioners and continues to champion and continues to work and advocate for the employment, security and safety of public housing residents.

Other individuals who provide leadership in public housing are people like Deverra Beverly, who is the chairman of the local advisory council at the Abta Public Housing Complex. Also, Ms. Cora Moore at Cabrini-Green, and Ms. Carolyn Willingham. Both provide tremendous leadership in the Cabrini-Green complex. Ms. Maner Wiley and Lorena Nellum at the Hilliard Homes. Ms. Gloria Williams at the Nazariah Safe Haven. Ms. Brenda Bolden in the Lawndale area. Ms. Cora Dillard in Robert Taylor. Ms. Deborah Martin and Ms. Mildred Dennis in Robert Taylor. Ms. Mary Baldwin at Rockwell Gardens. Ms. Francine Washington at Stateway Gardens. Ms. Beatrice Harris at Wentworth Gardens. And, of course, Ms. Shirley Hammond, who has developed a business in the Cabrini area and represents the senior housing on the north side of the city; and Ms. Martha Marshall, who represents the Senior Housing Central and has developed a business which is part of the business development activity for the area.

The last woman that I will mention, as we talk about outstanding Chicago women, is one of great historical significance. Jane Addams, the mother of social work, Nobel Peace Prize recipient, and an individual extolled by President Franklin Roosevelt as Chicago's most useful citizen.

Jane Addams established Hull House, Chicago's first settlement house for the underprivileged in 1889. Hull House quickly became an innovative place for gathering, learning, obtaining a free meal, gaining employment, and even organizing union activity. She later became a vocal advocate for women's suffrage and humanitarian causes in the early 20th century and reasoned that

"civilization is a method of living and an attitude of equal respect for all people."

She held leadership positions in several key organizations throughout her life, including the National Progressive Party and the International Congress of Women. Fortunately, Jane Addams was not destined to always be a suffragette, never a voter. She lived until 1931 and saw an American woman's right to vote become a reality in 1920.

In closing, Jane Addams also sagaciously stated that national events determine our ideas as much as our ideas determine national events. Indeed, Women's History Month is a national event which celebrates the ideas of our Nation and the spirit and triumph of the women's movement; and so it makes sense for us to stop, to pause, to realize and to recognize the tremendous contribution that women have made and continue to make in the development of this country.

REINTEGRATING EX-OFFENDERS INTO SOCIETY

I think I will shift at this time a bit, Mr. Speaker, and talk about an issue that I think is one of the most serious issues facing our country, and that is the issue of successfully reintegrating ex-offenders back into the normalcy of society; that is, successfully reintegrating ex-offenders back into normal life after they have been incarcerated, after they have served time and are now looking for a way to become, one might say, normal again.

On February 7, I introduced what is now called the Public Safety Ex-offender Self-sufficiency Act of 2002. The Public Safety Ex-offender Self-sufficiency Act amends the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reflect an ex-offender low-income housing credit to encourage the provision of housing, job training, and other essential services to ex-offenders through a structured living environment designed to assist the ex-offenders in becoming self-sufficient.

The United States Department of Justice, the National Institute of Justice, said in November of 2000 that in the United States, and I quote them, "There are virtually no systematic, comprehensive approaches to dealing with reintegrating ex-offenders." This is a comprehensive legislative initiative that will address recidivism, cost of crime to victims, and public safety. Let us see if we can make the case.

The problem of successfully reintegrating ex-offenders back into normal life is one of the major issues facing low-income and minority communities throughout the Nation. It is a serious public safety issue that requires serious public attention. While 5 percent of the world's population lives in the United States, 25 percent of the world's prison population are in United States' jails and prisons. Nationally, the United States Department of Justice reports that there are now over 2 million people in State and Federal prisons, more than a threefold increase since 1980.

This year, more than 600,000 people will leave prison and return to neighborhoods across the country. The problem of ex-offenders impacts all levels of our society. In 1998, there were 225,700 veterans held in the Nation's prisons and jails, 56,500 Vietnam War era veterans, and 18,500 Persian Gulf War era veterans. The Justice Department reports that 20 percent of those veterans in prison or jail reported seeing combat duty during their military service.

As of November 2000, 45,617 adults were incarcerated in Illinois prisons. During that same period, 29,120 were on parole. We have even looked at a study prepared by Claritas and commissioned by the Stein Family Foundation that 70 percent of men between the ages of 18 and 45 in one particular Chicago community are ex-offenders. In America, the poor and people of color are more likely to be incarcerated. Fifty-three percent of people warehoused in our Nation's prisons earned less than \$10,000 a year prior to incarceration.

Although the minority population is approximately 13 percent, 66 percent of the Nation's prison population are people of color. Nearly 4.6 million adult men and women were on probation or parole at the end of 2000, an increase of almost 70,700 during that year. While 52 percent of those on probation have been convicted of committing a felony, 46 percent were convicted of misdemeanors. Of the offenders on parole, 97 percent had been sentenced to incarceration of more than 1 year. According to the Soros Institute, 72 percent of those entering State prison for the first time were nonviolent offenders.

Studies indicate that the median education level of released prisoners is 11th grade. In addition, three-fourths of those reentering prison have a history of substance abuse. Not surprisingly, 16 percent suffer from mental illness.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice statistics, at the end of 2000 State prisons were operating between full capacity and 15 percent above capacity, while Federal prisons were operating at 31 percent above capacity.

As our Nation's prison population explodes and prison operating costs skyrocket, little is done to prepare these adults for reentry. In fact, the National Institute of Justice reports that 14 States have abolished discretionary parole and the parole boards that historically managed prisoner reentry.

There is a shortage of vocational, educational and substance abuse programs in prison. In fact, like States all over the country, Illinois recently cut the post-GED programs. According to the sentencing project, more than 100,000 prisoners are being released each year without any form of community correctional supervision.

□ 1700

The recidivism rate remains high, and studies show that a direct correlation between homelessness and recidivism exists. The Chicago Continuum of

Care reported that 6.5 percent of respondents noted that release from jail was a contributing factor for homelessness. In addition, 7.1 percent responded that release from incarceration was the primary factor for homelessness. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, 62 percent of those released from State prisons will be rearrested within 3 years, and 40 percent will be reincarcerated, including many for technical violation of parole.

In 1997, the Illinois recidivism rate for African Americans exceeded the national norm: blacks, 48.2 percent; whites, 35.7 percent; Hispanics, 30.9 percent; and others, 28 percent. A staggering 36.4 percent returned due to a new sentence. Ex-offenders that are truly interested in reintegrating back into community life, interested in finding employment and taking care of themselves and their families, locating housing, going to school, oftentimes have no place to go. There are very few second chances.

What happens to a man or woman who cannot find an employer willing to give them a second chance, refused TANF benefits, cannot receive subsidized housing, educational or medical assistance? We have seen over and over again that they return to prison. We hope to convince the Nation that by supporting these initiatives we begin the process of, one, saving ourselves; two, protecting our persons and property; three, reducing the human and capital costs of recidivism; and, four, we begin to seriously impact in a positive way the quality of life for everyone.

Neighborhoods across the Nation are absorbing the economic and social cost of reintegrating hundreds of thousands of ex-offenders back into society each year. In 1991, the Bureau of Justice reported that the cost of the justice system per resident was \$299. In 1996, the Department of Justice reported that the cost of crime to victims rises to approximately \$450 billion a year, or \$1,800 per man, woman, and child.

That is to say if we could find a way to seriously reduce crime, reduce recidivism, provide opportunities for these individuals to become self-sufficient, to learn a trade, develop a skill, go to school, get a job, then not only are we providing for them, but we are in reality helping all of America. According to a poll commissioned by the ACLU, people across the Nation are not satisfied with the current prison system. In addition, the poll released in July 2001 found that six in 10 Americans believe that it is possible to rehabilitate a nonviolent offender. Other key findings of the ACLU poll support alternative punishments for many non-violent offenses. In addition, 69 percent of respondents believe that prisons should be required to teach skills. That is, individuals ought to be able to develop to the extent that when they leave a correctional facility they are in better shape than they were when they first went in.

As these men and women transition from incarceration to freedom, what they need most are comprehensive re-entry solutions. What they find instead are often cold stares, unreturned phone calls, and closed doors. The jobs are like an old man's teeth, few and far apart. Housing is scarce, and other social services are in most cases nonexistent for the serious and earnest men and women desirous of working to clean up their act and transition into productive citizens.

Mr. Speaker, with the implementation of this bill nationally, the recidivism rate just might decrease. Prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation are just as important as incarceration. These men, women, and children always must live in some communities. Increased public safety is a primary concern of communities and neighborhoods all over the country. In the Seventh Congressional District of Illinois, Ex-offenders Task Force representing a broad group, including representatives from national and local civil rights organizations, community-based organizations, ex-offenders, academicians, law enforcement officials, elected officials, community activists, faith-based organizations, block club residents, businesses and community residents, are all in serious collaboration to try and find direction and, hopefully, solutions.

The Public Safety Ex-Offender Self-Sufficiency Act addresses several serious needs and barriers this population must overcome in order to successfully reintegrate. Through the efforts of the task force, we confirmed that housing still remains a key barrier. In fact, secure and safe and affordable housing is a stabilizing force for the formerly incarcerated.

From Los Angeles to New York and in Chicago, ex-offenders are deterred from a fresh start, a second chance. These men and women face countless legal barriers. In Chicago, for example, ex-offenders are prohibited from living in public housing and from working in many public agencies. In Illinois, ex-offenders are prohibited from working in 57 occupational categories without some form of waiver. Nationally, ex-offenders that are convicted of drug offenses after 1996 are unable to receive Pell Grants.

According to a 1998 NACRO study, 13 percent of prisoners were homeless before their sentence, and 34 percent had lost homes because of prison. As a result, half the sample were therefore at risk of being homeless on release. The study also notes that prisoners that are released homeless are much more likely to offend or to reoffend. In addition, a housing research study, "The Housing Needs of Ex-Prisoners," identified three factors to determine whether ex-offenders succeeded in retaining their homes: one, the quality of family relationships; two, the availability of housing entitlements; three, current financial status.

The study also noted that ex-offenders face other problems in rehousing

which includes access to independent mainstream accommodations, arranging housing accommodations other than in hotels prior to release, and very few ex-prisoners agree to live in hotels or homeless shelters because of concern about recidivism.

But the issues are much broader than housing alone: Federal Pell Grants, expungement, jobs, health care. Through our legislative initiative, we are looking at reintegrating ex-offenders from a holistic perspective, trying to address factors while acknowledging that affordable and available housing is an overarching need. This legislation will help to meet that need. But the other thing about this legislation is that it is cost effective. It is not designed to just ask the government or somebody to provide grants. It really uses the low-income housing tax credit system that we are all familiar with where States receive credits based upon population.

In this instance we simply take the number of ex-offenders who are released to a particular State, and then provide credits to that State based upon its number of ex-offenders. Private developers will be encouraged to develop the housing that is needed which they must hold for 15 years. After 10 years, they will have recouped the money that they have invested so it makes good business sense, good business sense for the private developers who will develop the housing that is needed; good business sense for the communities who will have help in aiding their ex-offenders; and good business sense because it will help a category of individuals to become self-sufficient, contributing members of society who then will be in a position to give rather than to take, will be in a position to become substantial helpers, to make America become what America has the potential of being.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues, I urge business and industry, I urge social workers and social scientists all to get behind this legislation because I believe that it could provide hope for the hopeless and help for the helpless.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS).

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I congratulate the gentleman for touching on an issue of enormous consequence that does not get the attention that it deserves, that is, we have in this country the largest per capita rate of incarcerated people; and I think the evidence as the gentleman has just indicated is very clear that we do not do a good job of reintegrating those people into society. The result is an enormous amount of pain, human destruction, and a great deal of expense to the American taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, what I want to touch on, and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) might be interested in this issue, is another issue that does not get a great deal of attention, and that is the increasing concentration of media ownership in the United States today.

In my view we cannot be a vibrant democracy unless the people get information, unless the people know what the most important issues are that are facing them. I fear very much that in recent years what we have seen is fewer and fewer large, multinational corporations own and control the media of this country. We are seeing huge corporations like General Electric, like Disney, like Rupert Murdoch's News Incorporated control major television networks. We have seen fewer and fewer large companies control radio outlets so that increasingly it is difficult for people in various communities to get local news because their local radio stations have been bought up by large national organizations.

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We see in terms of newspapers and in magazines fewer and fewer large corporations controlling those as well.

I think people are not aware of the degree of corporate ownership of the media in this country and the fact that recent court rulings will make that situation even worse and allow fewer and fewer large companies to own more and more of the media.

Some of the largest media conglomerates in this country are AT&T, AOL Time Warner, the Liberty Media Corporation, Viacom, Walt Disney Corporation, the News Corporation, General Electric, Vivendi, Bertelsmann and Sony. And if you add together what these 10 corporations own, one would be absolutely amazed to the degree that they own television, radio, newspapers, magazines, book publishing, movie companies and so forth.

A concern that I have is that, given this corporate control over the media, the American people get relatively little discussion about some of the most important issues facing this country. For example, Mr. Speaker, I am not aware that most Americans know that the United States of America today is the only industrialized nation on earth that does not have a national health care system guaranteeing health care to all people and yet we spend twice as much per capita on health care than any other nation. Some people may think national health care is a good idea. Some people may think it is a bad idea. But I wonder how much discussion there has been on corporately controlled media or on the radio stations pointing out that every other industrialized nation has a national health care system and we do not. That is an issue that should be discussed.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. DREIER. I thank my friend from Illinois for yielding. I would like to listen attentively to my friend from Vermont for just a couple of minutes, and then I would like to briefly, if the gentleman has time, respond to the question that the gentleman just posed.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, what are some of the most important issues facing the vast majority of the people? The President of the United States seems to think that the most important issue is that we give huge tax breaks to the wealthiest people in this country. In fact, as a result of recent legislation passed here, some \$500 billion over a 10-year period are going to be given in tax breaks to the wealthiest 1 percent, people with a minimum income of \$375,000 a year.

Maybe there are some districts in this country where that is the most important issue, but it is not the case in Vermont, I doubt it is the case in Chicago, and I doubt that it is the case in most districts in this country.

I will tell you what some of the issues are that the American people are concerned about. They are concerned about health care and wondering why 44 million Americans do not have health care and why we are the only major country without a national health care program while we spend twice as much as any other country per capita on health care. They are wondering about why pensions are being cut for working people all over this country, health care benefits are being cut for workers all over this country, while the CEOs of major corporations now earn 500 times what their workers earn.

There are some people who may think, hey, that is a good idea. No problem. No problem that the United States has the most unfair distribution of wealth and income in the industrialized world, where the wealthiest 1 percent own more wealth than the bottom 95 percent. No problem.

But I just met with paralyzed veterans in this country who were in my office saying, why can we not put more money into the Veterans' Administration so we take care of the men and women who put their lives on the line to defend this country? Some people think that taking care of veterans, putting money into education, putting money into child care, paying off our national debt, might be more important than giving huge tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SANDERS. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. DREIER. I thank my friend for yielding.

Let me just say at the outset, as far as the first question that my friend posed about the control that the large media has had in preventing people from having the opportunity to engage in a debate on whether or not we should have a nationalized health care system, I would say very clearly, my friend from Vermont and I have together appeared on a number of fora on television programs that are provided because the technological advances that have been made in this country due to large investments that come from those in the media providing a

wide range of choices for the American consumer and the television viewer to engage in debate.

Mr. SANDERS. Let me reclaim the time from my friend. I have appeared on national TV programs, I am going to be on one tonight, as a matter of fact, but the issue of why the United States is the only country in the world without a national health care system has never been the topic of discussion on any program that I have been on and I doubt any program that my friend has been on.

Mr. DREIER. Let me give my friend a little bit of advice. I have found, from having appeared on the different CNN and Fox News Channel and MSNBC programs, you can provide whatever answer to whatever question you have. I know that my friend who is so committed to bringing up the issue as to whether or not we should have a national health care system, that he can engage in that debate regardless of what question that they are posing to him.

Mr. SANDERS. Taking my time back, my friend is right. I can probably get 15 seconds into the debate before a moderator jumps in.

Let me ask my friend a question. I am glad that he is here.

Mr. DREIER. If I could just raise one more issue before you pose that. That is, that we at this moment, and I know that as chairman of the Committee on Rules that we are not to address those who might be outside of this Chamber viewing it, but because of technological advances that have been made in this country due to investment that has taken place into a wide range of new and innovative and creative areas, we are able to have this coverage carried beyond this Chamber. I think that by virtue of our having a discussion right now on this issue that my friend raises is a very important one, that has come about because of the level of creativity that exists in the United States.

I should say that it is a complete mischaracterization to say that we are not committed from this side of the aisle or in a bipartisan way to dealing with the concerns of veterans, because we have dramatically increased the level of funding for veterans. At the same time, the focus on education and health care continues to be a priority.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PENCE). Respectfully, the Chair would remind Members that the time is controlled by the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. DREIER. I thank the gentleman from Illinois for yielding to me.

Mr. SANDERS. I appreciate my friend from California being here. This is a good discussion.

The issue that I wanted to pose is, yes, I can get on national shows and I occasionally do, but we have a problem. Let us talk about the radio for a second. I would characterize the United States as being kind of a centrist country, not right wing, not left wing, kind of centrist. In the last election, as you

know, Gore and Nader got more votes than did Mr. Bush and Mr. Buchanan, by a few million votes. Kind of a centrist country.

If you turned on talk radio today, would my friend agree with me that what you would hear is one extreme right winger after another right winger after another right winger? So that even a moderate or progressive voice, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) and I are probably progressives, we know that our people are not going to have a radio station with Rush Limbaugh and his friends out there, Gordon Liddy and all these other folks out there.

But is it somehow interesting, I would think it is somehow interesting, that a country which is basically centrist, that one talk radio show after another is dominated by not right wingers but extreme right wingers.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. DREIER. I thank the gentleman from Illinois for yielding.

I would say the answer is, number one, it has to do with the market and the listenership. The fact is those programs would not be on were it not for the fact that there is a demand for that listenership. I would say that there are other programs that are out there that do, in fact, offer a perspective. I consider myself to be very progressive myself, I should say.

Mr. SANDERS. You are a progressive?

Mr. DREIER. I consider myself a progressive, yes.

Mr. SANDERS. If you are a progressive, then I would hate to see who is conservative, with all due respect.

Mr. DREIER. It all depends on the definition. But I will tell you that I clearly do believe that there are a wide range of opportunities out there for voices from any side of the issue in this country.

Mr. SANDERS. I have suggested to you, and you do not deny it, that in the last election more people voted for Gore and Nader than voted for the President and Mr. Buchanan, suggesting that we are somewhat of a centrist country. You say that the reason is the market.

Mr. DREIER. I did not say that. That is not what I said.

Mr. SANDERS. That is exactly what you said. These stations are there. They are listened to by the people. But I am suggesting that it is not the market. The people in this country want a variety of viewpoints. Talk radio is predominantly extreme right wing. It is extreme right wing because the stations are owned by conservative multinational corporations.

Mr. DREIER. If the gentleman will yield on that point, that is just a preposterous claim, to say that it is based on the ownership. The programming that has come forward and the demand for more conservative talk radio is in large part due to a level of frustration that the American people have with

what is interpreted by many to be a leftward tilt for the control of what is called the mainstream media.

Let me just say, I am not one of those harsh critics who says that. I happen to believe that we need to do everything we can to encourage a free-flowing debate on a wide range of issues and concerns. But I will say this. I know full well that the ownership of the media out there does not play a role in the editorial comment when it comes to the talk show messages that are getting out there.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Reclaiming my time, let me suggest this, that ownership determines who the commentators are; and so in a sense you cannot discount the impact of ownership on what ultimately becomes the direction and content. I find that people listen to those stations more often that they relate to. And so if they relate to the right-wing station, that is where they are going to go. And so if the owner hires a right-wing commentator, then I would have to agree with the gentleman from Vermont, that ownership does play a role in what ultimately gets on.

Mr. DREIER. If my friend would yield on that point, I would say that there clearly is a leftward tilt by a lot of the ownership, then.

I represent Los Angeles. A lot of people in southern California spend a great deal of time in their automobiles. I will say that I, as I know my friends from both Vermont and Illinois, participate on these programs. There are a wide range of programs that are carried by people who my friend from Vermont would describe as progressive or very liberal. I am happy to participate on those shows. I can name them for you in Los Angeles.

Mr. SANDERS. There are a diversity of viewpoints. There is no argument about that. But I would say any objective look at what goes out there, say, in terms of talk radio, is that the tilt is not only right but extreme right.

Mr. DREIER. I disagree.

Mr. SANDERS. You would be hard-pressed to name national progressive radio talk show hosts. We could name one of the Limbaughs of the world ad nauseam on the right. But the bottom line is, as the gentleman from Illinois just indicated, when you have a multinational company like General Electric, what is General Electric's shtick? What do they do?

Mr. DREIER. The gentleman has asked the question, what does General Electric do? I am happy to tell you what they do.

Mr. SANDERS. If I could finish, please.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair reminds Members that all time is controlled by the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. DREIER. I suspect the gentleman from Illinois wants the gentleman from Vermont to continue.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. I yield to the gentleman from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. The bottom line here is that one has got to be very naive not to understand that companies like General Electric that spend millions of dollars on lobbyists here to take jobs to China, that send money to lower their taxes, that send money to build nuclear power plants, to increase military spending and so forth are not going to, within the confines of what they own, present that point of view and discourage discussion on a whole lot of other issues.

If you are a member of a trade union in America, you make 30 percent more than workers who are not in a trade union. Frankly, I have never seen that discussion on television or radio in my life, an enormously important issue like that. The growing gap between the rich and the poor is discussed far, far too little.

I am not going to deny that there are different points of view that are heard. But I think the bottom line is, no question, that corporate ownership of this country is growing in terms of the media and that we are hearing fewer and fewer points of view that represent working people, middle-income people and minority people.

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Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield further, let me totally disagree with the assessment that my friend from Vermont has just provided. For starters, I do not think I have ever owned a share of stock in General Electric, and I have no idea whether I have received contributions from their lobbyists here. I suspect some of them may have contributed to my campaigns.

But I happen to believe that companies like General Electric have dramatically improved the quality of life for the people in the United States of America, and I say that because it is very clear that consumer products, regardless of where they are manufactured in the world, that are sold here in the United States, the best quality at the lowest possible price, is something that is very good for the United States of America.

I know that we have the most productive workers on the face of the Earth; and when it comes to technology, the United States of America is on the cutting edge, creating a wide range of new technologies. This is one of the reasons that I was so proud to work on behalf of Trade Promotion Authority, so that we can pry open new markets around the world which will create an opportunity for goods and services here in the United States to be able to move into those economies in other parts of the world.

When it comes to the issue of ownership, I am convinced that with cable television, with the multifarious radio programs that are out there representing a wide range of views, and I know from having talked with many of the owners, they do not exercise control over much of the programming.

Some of them may be more sympathetic than some of the others; but I will tell you, we happen to believe that the editorial pages of the New York Times and Washington Post have a leftward tilt, and I think the success of talk radio on the conservative side is in large part a response, a response, to a level of frustration that many Americans have felt over the message that has come from the New York Times and the Washington Post editorial pages.

So I happen to believe that we have some wonderful, wonderful things taking place in this country; and we need to do more to encourage creativity. And the idea of having the government clamp down, jeopardizing the opportunity to pursue new technologies, which it will take investment to do, would just plain be wrong.

I have to go upstairs, but I thank my friend for yielding; and I very much appreciate the opportunity to engage in this discussion and look forward to again another free-flowing debate with hundreds of thousands of people following us as we talk about whether or not we should have a national healthcare system.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Reclaiming my time, I think both gentlemen would, in fact, have to agree that in our country and in a democracy like ours, we live often by the golden rule; but we also have to acknowledge that whoever has got the most gold, most often makes the rules. And I am afraid that too much of the gold is becoming concentrated in too few places, which really means that corporate ownership is becoming too powerful; and when it does, then it makes for a skewed democracy or a more one-sided decision-making process, and it needs to be balanced off a little bit, which really means that more people need to become part of the ownership of America, rather than too few people owning too much.

If that is the thesis that the gentleman from Vermont is promoting, then I would agree with him, and yield for further amplification.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I think my friend said it very, very well. This is a great Nation, and we have enormous things to be proud of. But I remain very, very concerned that fewer and fewer people own more and more of our economy, own more and more of our media, while, at the same time, the average person that the gentleman and I represent are working, in many cases, longer hours for lower wages just to keep their heads above water.

But the point of my remarks tonight was not just to talk about the economy and ownership in the economy, but was to talk about the media; and my deep concern is that the American people are not hearing all points of view; that corporate ownership of the media is preventing a large segment of ideas which represent the thinking of many, many Americans from getting out there, and I think that is not good for our democracy.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. I thank the gentleman, and, reclaiming my time, I would have to agree. I would even go beyond just the media. I mean, one of the reasons, for example, that I am so much in favor of employees reaching the point where they exercise more ownership of where they are and where they work is because the more you spread the ownership, the more you open up the process; and the more open the process, the greater the potential for this commodity that we call democracy. I think that is what we are constantly striving for, a more democratic Nation, where more people are engaged and are part of the decision-making.

I want to thank the gentleman for coming down.

Mr. SANDERS. I thank my friend for allowing me to participate.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF SENATE AMENDMENT TO H.R. 3090, ECONOMIC SECURITY AND RECOVERY ACT OF 2001

Mr. DRIER (during special order of Mr. DAVIS of Illinois), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 107-367) on the resolution (H. Res. 360) providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 3090) to provide tax incentives for economic recovery, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

PRICE SUPPORT PAYMENT LIMITATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PENCE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, the agricultural industry in the United States over the last 100 years has contributed a great deal. As we develop this year's farm bill, we are now trying to decide, number one, how much should we pay in terms of tax subsidies to farmers, tax dollars going into subsidies to farmers, to make sure that the agricultural industry in the United States survives.

Farmers are facing record low prices compared to the last 20 years. In fact, in terms of what a bushel of wheat would buy, the wheat price today is much lower than it was 50 years ago.

What kind of policy do we want in the United States? We are now in a subsidy war, if you will, with other countries. Other countries have decided they are going to do anything necessary to keep their farmers operating, so they are subsidizing their farmers in these other countries substantially. Their extra production from Europe, from these other countries, go into what would otherwise be our markets, so the resulting overproduction from all over the world results in low commodity prices, and the low commodity prices today would not keep most farmers in business.

Subsidies in the United States represent about 17 percent of the gross income of the average farm. The average net income of an average farm is around 6 percent. So, again, without the subsidy payments, most farms in the United States would lose money every year.

Now, the irony is that farmers do not like to have this subsidy check coming from the government. They would much rather have a real marketplace, where there was real competition throughout the world, where they could compete and make good money farming. And make no mistake, our farmers in the United States can compete, if you will, excuse the expression, on a level playing field, with any other agricultural producers in the world in most commodities.

Our challenge right now is the Senate has passed one farm bill, and the House has passed another farm bill, substantially different in the concepts of where they want agriculture to go and what they want in the farm bill. That includes rural development, that includes the environment in rural areas, that includes the WIC program for food for infants and pregnant mothers, that includes the Food Stamp program.

Just as a footnote here, let me say how we have changed the U.S. Department of Agriculture over the last 50 years. USDA, that part of USDA that is involved in production agriculture, with farmers, now represents only about 25 percent of the total budget of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

I am here tonight to talk about payment limitations to some of the huge mega-farmers in the United States. The Senate in their bill had provisions that incorporated a level of payment limitations in the hope that some of the large mega-farms would have some kind of a cap, some kind of limit on the payments they received, so there would be more money for what I would call the average mainstream farmer in the United States and some of the other programs in the agricultural bill.

We passed an agriculture bill back in 1996 that pretty much everybody supported. All of the farm organizations thought it was a good idea. What that was is the Freedom to Farm, and it was a phase-out of government subsidy programs. So over 7 years, the subsidy payments to farmers went down and down, and then in the eighth year farmers were supposed to produce strictly for the market.

What happened is the economy in Asia was tremendously disrupted and their purchases went down, and we had a glut of extra farm production; so prices went down, and even with the one subsidy phase-out payment, farmers were going broke, going out of business, going bankrupt.

Now we are developing this new farm legislation, and the question before us is should we have payment limitations on how much money any one farm operation can receive in payments from the Federal Government.