

During my time in Congress, I have strongly supported legislation that would help employees prepare for their retirement. Pension reform legislation affects all working Americans. As such, both parties in Congress have a responsibility to work together in a thoughtful and conscientious manner on this issue.

To that end, I am a cosponsor of H.R. 1776, the bipartisan Pension Preservation and Savings Expansion Act of 2003, which expands savings options, empowers employees to take control of their retirement plan investments and gives workers substantial new rights to avoid over-concentration in the stock of their own company.

By modifying the rules that apply to retirement plans, the Pension Preservation and Savings Expansion Act provides workers with needed control over their retirement plan investments while preserving the opportunity for employee ownership. Through new diversification rights, new disclosure requirements and new tax incentives for retirement education, this legislation would help employees achieve retirement security.

I have serious concerns with the substitute before us today. Unfortunately, the substitute overreacts to the unfortunate circumstances surrounding Enron's historic bankruptcy. Congress has a duty to the American people to enact responsible legislation that will benefit employees rather than impose new administrative burdens on millions of retirement plans.

The substitute would thwart bipartisan efforts to reduce administrative burdens on employers who voluntarily sponsor retirement plans by imposing new, expensive rules on such plans. The substitute's provision that would require retirement plans to insure against vaguely defined plan asset losses would increase the cost of these retirement plans, creating a disincentive for employers to offer their employees a pension plan.

Additionally, under the substitute, a plan participant is allowed to divest of company stock held in an account after just one year. This one-year diversification provision runs the significant risk of causing disruptions in both plan administration and the markets.

Further, the substitute would require employers to create joint employer-employee retirement plan trusteeships. Employers in Kansas's Third District have assured me that this provision has the potential to complicate plan administration to the point that some employers may drop their plans altogether. The working people of this country deserve a more thoughtful, careful process from their Federal representatives.

While the substitute goes too far in seeking to ensure reasonable safeguards on employer sponsored retirement plans, the underlying bill before us today does not go quite far enough in protecting working Americans. But, it is a good start.

I am voting for the underlying bill today to keep this process moving. I hope, however, that the Senate considers strengthening the bill's provisions with regard to investment advice to ensure that the advice workers receive through their employer is truly independent. I would suggest that the Senate consider allowing, on a tax-preferred basis, individuals to seek the investment advisor of their choice. In addition, I hope the Senate addresses the issue of corporate and executive abuses brought to light in recent scandals. I submit that imposing an excise tax on excessive cor-

porate payments to senior executives in periods prior to bankruptcy is a good start. I believe this will help prevent insiders from draining assets from a company as its stock value declines.

For the record, both of these suggestions are contained within H.R. 1776, the aforementioned Pension Preservation and Savings Expansion Act of 2003. I urge the House to come together quickly and consider this bipartisan bill so that the Senate may have a range of options from which to advance reasonable, much needed pension reform that will benefit working Americans.

I will continue to support bipartisan efforts to reform our Nation's retirement system in a manner that benefits both employers and employees. I urge my colleagues to do the same and hope that the legislative process will ultimately produce a bipartisan conference report which we may all proudly support.

COMMEMORATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF SOUTH SUBURBAN MAYORS AND MANAGERS ASSOCIATION

HON. JESSE L. JACKSON, JR.

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2003

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the 108th Congress of the United States of America, I write to congratulate and commemorate the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA) on its 25th Anniversary.

For the past quarter of a century, the SSMMA has provided leadership to protect and enhance the health, security, education and welfare of its people, and the vision to promote and ensure social and economic justice for more than 650,000 people in more than 40 municipalities in Chicago's South Suburban area.

The SSMMA also has served as a tireless proponent of fairness, opportunity and prosperity for the Chicago Southland for 25 years; and has spoken in a common voice—and with common sense—to further the quality of life in these communities.

Moreover, the SSMMA has served as a clearinghouse for elected officials from local, county, state and federal governments to work in harmony to improve housing, public safety, transportation, the environment, economic development, public works, technology and municipal management in its member communities.

So, in recognition of the Association's dedication and advocacy for the common good, the 108th Congress of the United States hereby applauds and congratulates the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association for 25 years of successful public service and coalition building in the community.

CONGRATULATING RYAN MROWKA OF DUNKIRK, NEW YORK ON HIS MANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

HON. JACK QUINN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2003

Mr. QUINN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of my constituent, Ryan Mrowka, of Dunkirk, New York.

Ryan graduated valedictorian from Dunkirk High School in 1999. He earned an Army ROTC scholarship to Boston College and will graduate Magna Cum Laude this Monday, May 19, 2003.

Beyond his academic success, Ryan deserves recognition for his capable leadership and commitment to public service. He complemented his opportunities at Boston College with a generous spirit of involvement in campus ministry. His numerous activities included retreat planning and volunteer teaching at a local juvenile detention center. He also organized and led student trips to build homes in Appalachia and to help an orphanage in Honduras.

As an ROTC student, Ryan served as Cadet Battalion Commander; qualified as a basic parachutist at Airborne School; placed in the top tier of the "Ranger Challenge" military skills competition; and interned in the Pentagon to research the Army Transformation Plan. He completed the four-year education and training program in the top 20 percent of all U.S. Cadets, earning the prestigious "ROTC Distinguished Military Student" recognition and the "Boston College President's Award for Outstanding Cadet".

This Sunday, May 18, 2003, Ryan will be commissioned as Second Lieutenant in the Medical Service Corps. At only 22 years old, he will answer the courageous call to active duty this September 2003 as an officer in the U.S. Army.

Fittingly enough, Ryan plans to follow his four-year commitment to the Army with a career teaching social studies. He was recently inducted into the Phi Lambda Theta International Honor Society, the professional association in education, and the Golden Key National Collegiate Honor Society. Not only has he demonstrated the scholastic aptitude necessary to become an exceptional educator, but the natural potential to truly connect with, and inspire, young minds.

Mr. Speaker, college graduates like Ryan Mrowka epitomize the character and integrity of the people of Western New York. I commend him for his commitment to serve those less fortunate; willingness to protect our freedom; and dedication to educate future generations.

GEORGIANS MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN NATIONAL DEFENSE

HON. MAC COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2003

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to your attention an editorial that appeared in Georgia's Columbus Ledger Enquirer newspaper on April 9, 2003 entitled

"Georgians Make a Difference in National Defense." The editorial was written by Georgia State Senator Seth Harp, Chairman of the Veterans and Military Affairs Committee, and highlights the F/A Raptor Jet Fighter as essential investment to achieve air dominance for 21st Century military operations. The F/A 22 is important to my constituents, nearly 600 of them are working on the program in Columbus, Georgia and the plane itself is being assembled in Marietta, Georgia, but its real importance lies in the safety it provides our fighting men and women, and the security it brings to our national interests.

GEORGIANS MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN NATIONAL DEFENSE

Military preparedness is as important today as it has ever been. As the war against Saddam Hussein illustrates, it is incumbent upon the military industrial complex to provide our fighting men and women with the most sophisticated, accurate and state-of-the-art weaponry in the world. When the United States makes the decision to enter a conflict, it faces two challenges: achieve the ultimate goal as quickly as possible; and bring our sons and daughters, fathers and mothers, neighbors and friends home safely.

That is why next generation aircraft, such as the F/A-22 Raptor, deserves the full consideration, funding and support of Congress and the Pentagon. This jet fighter is currently in the testing stage, but with full deployment close at hand, we are about to see a revolution in how battle is waged in the sky.

The F/A-22 is supersonic, allowing our pilots to get to their target, drop their payload, and return to base faster and with a diminished threat of interception. The plane has stealth technology, allowing the jet to enter enemy airspace without detection and, for the first time, giving commanders an opportunity to use fighter planes during the daylight hours at the outset of a campaign instead of relying on the cloak of darkness. It has the most sophisticated avionics and weapon systems in the world, ensuring the dominance of air space by our fighter pilots.

Bottom line: The United States stands on the verge of advancing fighter jet technology to levels unmatched, unimagined and unbeatable by any other nation on Earth.

There is a certain inevitability that the F/A-22 has its detractors. There are those that believe we don't need improvements in fighter jet technology and that we already have air superiority. Still others have pet projects that they want funded with research, development and construction dollars being spent on the F/A-22. And some argue that our national security interests are being met and, in fact, we need to scale back on funding next generation technology.

My response is we can agree to disagree. I believe strongly that if the technology exists to advance the safety and security of our nation and the men and women who fight to protect us, we should aggressively foster the research and development of those opportunities. The F/A-22 is proving itself to be a giant leap in that direction, and Fred Reed said it best in a recent article in the Washington Times: "Many weapons are just incremental improvements over existing designs. Occasionally, however, a weapon makes a major transition, as from propeller power to jet, and becomes a completely new thing. The F-22 was one of these."

Right here in Columbus, nearly 600 of our neighbors are working on the F/A-22 program, and the plane itself is being assembled at the Lockheed Martin plant in Marietta. This jet fighter is an important component to our nation's defense, and we should be

proud that Georgians are leading the effort to bring it from conception to reality. As officials at the Air Force said: "Air superiority saves the lives of America's sons and daughters who we send into harm's way in the air, on the ground and at sea. The F-22 is an essential investment to achieve that air dominance—the key for 21st century military operations." It deserves our support, and those Georgians working on bringing the F/A-22 to the frontlines of our national defense deserve our thanks.

INTRODUCTION OF THE NATO PEACEKEEPING IN IRAQ ACT OF 2003

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2003

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce today H.R. 2112, the "NATO Peacekeeping in Iraq Act of 2003".

Mr. Speaker, our military forces have won a spectacular military victory in Iraq. We now face the challenge of rebuilding a peaceful, prosperous, democratic Iraq. Some argue that winning the peace will be far more difficult than winning the war. I could not disagree more. Although the fighting was brief, and the casualties few, the risks were great and the sacrifices of our armed forces enormous. Let no one minimize our battlefield achievements.

Nevertheless, our work is not done, and we must tackle the post-war challenge we face with the same creativity, intelligence, and commitment as we did the war itself. Although we should not expect that Iraq to become a Jeffersonian democracy overnight, we should expect from our leadership a clear and comprehensive strategy for addressing the pressing political, economic and humanitarian challenges we now face in Iraq.

My most pressing concern in this regard, Mr. Speaker, is the troubling security situation in Iraq. Security is the sine qua non of democratic reconstruction. Without it, there is no rule of law, no safety of property, no prospect of commerce. Without it, we will be unable to take the most basic steps toward building a prosperous, politically liberal Iraq.

These concerns lead me to believe we must have more military "boots on the ground" if we are to secure and rebuild Iraq, including an enhanced military police presence. These need not be—nor should be—the boots of the American military. The United States is not an occupying force, but a liberating one, and we must ensure perceptions reflect that reality. They should be the boots of a broad-based, international security force. And NATO should be at its core, just as NATO has recently agreed to do for the International Security Assistance Force in Kabul, Afghanistan.

I have long advocated that the combined forces of our Atlantic Alliance should be deployed to Iraq to carry out the critical stabilizing and peacekeeping missions there. Deploying NATO would increase the number of countries with a direct stake in the success of nation-building in Iraq. It would ease the burden on the current coalition. And, most important, it would mean more security for the Iraqi people. I understand that many of our friends in NATO are prepared to take up the challenge, particularly the Government of Poland.

This bill calls upon NATO to immediately begin contributing peacekeeping and civil order personnel to promote security and stability in Iraq. It also urges the President to use all appropriate diplomatic means to persuade NATO and NATO member nations to formally undertake a major peacekeeping and civil order mission in Iraq. It also authorizes funds to facilitate the deployment of NATO forces.

Thanks to the bravery and skill of our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines, the democratic nations of the world have an opportunity to bring the benefits of government for the people, by the people, and of the people to a land that is a cradle of civilization and one of the most important nations of the Middle East. It is in the interest of all democratic nations to prevent this opportunity from slipping away. The nations of NATO should be in Iraq, on the ground, to ensure this vision of democracy is fully realized.

RECOGNIZING KENTUCKY LANDMARK, FERRELL'S SNAPPY SERVICE

HON. ED WHITFIELD

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 15, 2003

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a Kentucky landmark, Ferrell's Snappy Service in Hopkinsville, Kentucky.

Ferrell's is one of the oldest, most successful small businesses in Kentucky. David Ferrell and his five elder brothers started their hamburger chain in 1930 in Owensboro, Kentucky. The business later expanded to Hopkinsville, Henderson, Madisonville and Cadiz, Kentucky. The Hopkinsville restaurant in the longest running of the chain, opening in 1936 when Franklin Roosevelt was President.

Mrs. Cecil Ferrell still operates Ferrell's in Hopkinsville today. Countless customers including myself look forward to dropping by, having a burger, and visiting with Mrs. Ferrell who is always there to greet you with a smile and good conversation.

Ferrell's Snappy Service has become an institution to its customers and Hopkinsville. After 67 years of service, perhaps one of the most beloved aspects of Ferrell's is how much it has not changed. Ferrell's is located in the same building in which it opened in downtown Hopkinsville. It offers the same menu of hamburgers, chili, pecan pie, potato chips, and cold colas. This has not gone unnoticed by its faithful customers. One customer who moved to Texas returned to Hopkinsville to purchase 200 Ferrell's hamburgers before she returned to the Lone Star State. People from around the world have enjoyed Ferrell's hamburgers including a delivery that was dropped off by a tourist for Prince Charles and Princess Dianna in London. Customers can enjoy a hamburger 24 hours a day, six days a week, and Mrs. Ferrell has often said Ferrell's has been a meeting place for folks through the years who work late shifts or who just want to get together.

Ferrell's Snappy Service is a sound example of the importance and impact small businesses have on our economy. After 67 years of uninterrupted service, Ferrell's has served countless people and provided a great product at a fair price. Those who have been employed there and those who have dined there