

FREEDOM FOR ARNALDO RAMOS
LAUZERIQUE

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 10, 2005

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about Arnaldo Ramos Lauzerique, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Ramos Lauzerique is a member of the Cuban Institute of Independent Economists and the Assembly to Promote Civil Society. He believes that Cuba should be and will be free from the nightmare that is the Castro regime. He believes that the Cuban people are entitled to human rights, democracy, and freedom from tyranny. Because he believes in freedom and because he actively and peacefully advocates for liberty, Mr. Ramos Lauzerique has been targeted by the despotic regime.

In March 2003, as part of the tyrant's heinous island wide crackdown on peaceful, pro-democracy activists, Mr. Ramos Lauzerique was arrested by the regime. In a sham trial, he was sentenced to 18 years in the totalitarian gulag.

Mr. Ramos Lauzerique is over 60 years old and languishing in the revolting, hellish gulag. However, being confined in these inhuman conditions has not stopped him from continuing to demand justice for the people of Cuba and his fellow political prisoners. Amnesty International reports that Mr. Ramos Lauzerique has participated in at least two hunger strikes while imprisoned in Castro's dungeon. He has undertaken these strikes to bring attention to the repulsive squalor of the gulag, the lack of medical attention, and the barbaric punishment cells; all in defiance of the machinery of repression that has unjustly confined him in these repugnant conditions.

Mr. Speaker, it remains categorically unacceptable that men and women who demand freedom from tyranny are locked in the dungeons of tyrannical monsters. Here, under the dome that represents modern democracy, we must continue to demand the liberation of all who suffer in the darkness of totalitarianism. As we continue to exercise our democratic rights, let us never forget those who are struggling to liberate their own nations. My Colleagues, we must demand the immediate release of Arnaldo Ramos Lauzerique and every prisoner of conscience locked in Castro's totalitarian gulag.

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 750, THE SOCIAL SECURITY GUARANTEE PLUS ACT OF 2005

HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 10, 2005

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, whether we live in prosperous or uncertain times, American families need economic security—the kind of economic security that Social Security provides. For 70 years, Social Security has protected workers and their families from falling into poverty if a breadwinner retires, suffers disability, or dies. Social Security has endured, unlike many other government programs, because its architects designed it to be owned by workers and to treat all workers fairly.

Social Security has evolved over the decades, strengthening its protections and finances along the way. However, our nation's demographics and economics are fundamentally changing, and Social Security's ability to continue meeting its promises is threatened.

The Social Security Guarantee Plus Plan I am introducing today will enable Social Security to continue fulfilling its vital role in the lives of all Americans.

First, the Guarantee Plus Plan keeps intact the Social Security safety net. Promised benefits, including cost of living increases, are guaranteed for people receiving benefits today, tomorrow and for all future generations.

Second, the plan treats all workers fairly. Workers have paid into the system, it's their money, and we must protect and enhance their investment. It's not fair to workers to raise their payroll taxes or lower their benefits. Nor is it fair for the government to tell workers to work longer. That's why my plan does not raise taxes, does not lower benefits, and does not change the retirement age.

Third, Social Security payroll taxes belong to the workers who paid them. My plan gives workers a real ownership stake in Social Security by allowing them to choose to receive a tax cut to invest directly in prudent, individually-selected, market investments. For the first time, a nation of savers, not the government, will own and control the assets backing Social Security. Should an individual die before becoming eligible, the balance of their money will be passed along to their heirs.

Fourth, under my plan, Social Security can be counted on for the next 75 years, and beyond. Real assets guarantee current and future benefits, establishing a sound and sustainable financial footing. No longer will there be a need to periodically increase taxes or lower benefits to keep the program working.

Beyond keeping these promises to all Americans, we must also do more to improve Social Security for the women of our nation. Because of their longer life expectancies and lower earnings, women are more likely to suffer poverty in old age. Social Security is a vital safety net for these women. In addition, because benefits are based on earnings, women are disadvantaged when they choose to stay home to raise their children. The Guarantee Plus Plan protects our daughters, our mothers, our aunts and our grandmothers, not only by securing the future of Social Security and guaranteeing full benefits, but also by enhancing benefits for widows, divorced spouses, and working mothers. These benefits become available immediately in my bill.

Here's how the Social Security Guarantee Plus Plan works. The plan guarantees full, promised, current law benefits for all workers, whether you are 6 or 65. Just as companies must back your pension plan with real assets, the Guarantee Plus Plan saves Social Security by setting aside real assets, not IOUs, to pre-fund benefits. These assets are saved in each worker's own account, thereby providing workers the opportunity to create real wealth for themselves and their families.

Workers who choose to participate will receive a refundable credit of up to 4% of their earnings to establish their own Social Security Guarantee Account. Workers, not the government, would select where to invest their Guarantee Account funds. The assets in these accounts would grow tax-free. No withdrawals would be permitted until a worker starts receiving benefits to ensure that the money is preserved for retirement.

At retirement or when the worker becomes disabled, a portion of the Guarantee Account is paid directly to the worker and the rest is used to help pay full, guaranteed Social Security benefits. But that's not all.

In addition to the much needed improvements in benefits for women I mentioned, my plan eliminates the retirement earnings penalty for all workers age 62 and older and reduces the so-called Government Pension Offset affecting spouse and survivor benefits to certain government workers.

Other plans may cost less, because they cut benefits or raise taxes. If our goal is to pay full promised benefits, boost women's benefits, and return Social Security to financial independence, the Guarantee Plus Plan is the lowest-cost proposal to date. The Guarantee Plus Plan does all this and pays for itself over the seventy five-year actuarial period, and that's confirmed by the Social Security Administration's Office of the Actuary in the 108th Congress. Even under the most conservative estimates, the Guarantee Plus Plan allows the new Social Security system to generate surplus cash in the latter part of the century, actually adding black ink to the government's bottom line.

My plan uses general revenues to fund the accounts. Even assuming borrowing for a transitional period, my plan pays back every borrowed dollar plus interest within the seventy five-year evaluation period. My plan also requires that Social Security surpluses created by the plan be dedicated to reducing publicly-held debt. Not only would we pay off the mortgage on Social Security, we would leave workers with substantial account balances and the federal government with excess cash.

The Guarantee Plus Plan also meets or exceeds all of the President's principles for reform—pays promised benefits to retirees, near-retirees, and all workers; no tax increases; no government investing; fully preserves disability and survivor benefits; offers individually controlled, voluntary personal retirement accounts that will augment Social Security. In addition, my plan is consistent with the first option to establish personal accounts recommended by the President's Commission to Strengthen Social Security.

President Bush has made the strengthening of Social Security now and for generations to come a top priority. Americans are showing their willingness to explore new ideas to strengthen this vital program, since the old ways must be improved upon for future generations. Now is the time for a straight-forward, honest and realistic discussion about the future of Social Security. The longer we wait to address the coming crisis, the more difficult and expensive the job will be down the line.

From the time of Social Security's enactment until today, the history of the program's evolution has demonstrated that while everybody has his or her own ideas on how to strengthen the program, progress toward that goal is only achieved through bipartisan cooperation. It's long past time for us to lay all our best thoughts on the table and work together to build on our success to make a stronger Social Security system that is an asset to all and not a liability to our children and grandchildren.

HONORING HENRIETTA SMITH AND NINA KLEIN

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 10, 2005

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the lives and the upcoming birthdays on February 14 of two outstanding Texas women, Henrietta C. Smith of Greenville, Texas, in the Fourth Congressional District, and her twin sister, Nina Lee Klein of Garland. Henrietta and Nina will celebrate their 85th birthdays with a family reunion in Austin, and I join their children, grandchildren, and many friends in recognition of this joyous occasion.

Henrietta and Nina have been excellent role models for their families and for young people who have known them. Henrietta obtained bachelor's and master's degrees from Texas

A&M University at Commerce and also attended Miss Hickey's Secretarial School in St. Louis, MO. A resident of Greenville for 54 years, she retired as a vocational counselor from Greenville High School in 1988. Prior to that, she was a guidance counselor at Greenville Junior High School and a sixth grade teacher at Bowie Elementary School. She remains active in the community, as an elder at Grace Presbyterian Church, past president and annual book sale volunteer for the American Association of University Women, and past president of the Greenville Area Retired Teachers and School Employees Association.

Nina also has been active in her church as well as various women's groups and is a lifelong homemaker. Although legally blind throughout her life, Nina graduated from Maryville University in St. Louis with a degree in sociology—a significant accomplishment—and has been a productive and active member of her community.

Henrietta was married to the late Wilson Smith, who died in 1968. They have three children—Charlotte Wright of Davidsonville, MD, Marsha Smith of Pahrump, NV, and Edward Smith of Fairfield, TX, as well as four grandchildren. Nina lost her husband, Walter Klein, in 1995. Their daughter, Barbara Klein, lives in Garland.

Although these sisters live 50 miles apart, they still see each other several times each month. As they celebrate their 85th birthday on Valentine's Day, February 14, with their family, I want to take this opportunity in the House of Representatives to extend my best wishes to Henrietta C. Smith and Nina Lee Klein for a wonderful celebration and recognize their many contributions to their families and their communities.

BILL TO ASSURE ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR BORDER SECURITY AGENTS

HON. C.A. DUTCH RUPPERSBERGER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 10, 2005

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a simple, straightforward bill to ensure that as the architects of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, we keep our promises regarding border security to the American people, the 9/11 Families who fought so tirelessly for passage of that legislation, and the members of the 9/11 Commission.

By architects, I am referring to Members of the House and Senate—both Democrat and Republican—who fought for Intel Reform and voted overwhelmingly to see that bill become law. I am also referring to the President, who signed that legislation into law on December 17, 2004.

Border security is not some esoteric term of art created by a bunch of lawyers writing complicated pieces of legislation that laymen will never understand. Border security means exactly what it says: secure our borders to prevent those who should not enter America from entering America. We wrote a good piece of legislation that prescribed additional funding for what we all agreed was needed—additional border security agents to implement our border security plan. We can write all the laws we want, but without boots on the ground in the place where we need them the most we cannot win the battle. This is as true in border security as it is in war.

I commend my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for passing Intel Reform last Congress. It was a tiresome fight well worth the result. It was not perfect, but the legislation signed into law by President Bush took a great

leap forward to protect our American families and communities.

That bill included a provision to add 2,000 border security agents every year for five years beginning in 2006. In order for that to happen, the President would need to budget for 2,000 additional agents in the budget he submitted this week to Congress and Congress would need to appropriate that money to the Department of Homeland Security. Only two months after signing Intel Reform into law, this Administration has budgeted for only 10 percent of the border security agents we agree were necessary.

I am introducing this bill to ensure that this legislative body keeps its word to the American people to provide 100 percent of the border security protection we decreed to be necessary. I urge House and Senate leadership to bring this bill to the floor immediately to rectify this discrepancy. I urge my colleagues to join me in funding this important priority and putting the boots on the ground where we said we need them to ensure our borders are secure.

CONGRATULATING NANCY TIPPINS ON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 10, 2005

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a dear friend and colleague who recently retired from Capitol Hill after three decades of exemplary service.

Nancy Tippins, a native of Auburn, Alabama, and graduate of Auburn University, first came to Washington, DC, in 1975 and accepted a position as legislative assistant on the staff of my predecessor, Representative Jack Edwards. Following Jack's retirement in 1984, Nancy was hired by my immediate predecessor, Representative Sonny Callahan, as his legislative director.

During her tenure with Sonny, Nancy became an invaluable member of the legislative team, a role made even more important in 1994 with Sonny's appointment as chairman of the House Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs. She quickly developed a thorough and extensive knowledge of subcommittee operations and the appropriations process, and during Sonny's chairmanship became an integral part of the team drafting each year's Foreign Operations appropriations bill.

Nancy's hard work and dedication to her colleagues and to the people of south Alabama won her wide admiration from Members and staff alike, and she developed a strong and well-deserved reputation for being a team player and a reliable source for assistance and information.

It would be difficult to adequately describe the tremendous gifts and skill Nancy brought to our office in Washington. Admired by members and staff on both sides of the aisle, she brought great levels of knowledge to the job and displayed tremendous dedication to the residents of Alabama's First Congressional District. As my legislative director for the past two years, I found my new job as a member of this chamber made much easier as a result of the breadth of knowledge Nancy possessed. Having worked side-by-side with her for twenty years, it was not hard for me to develop a deep and genuine respect for Nancy and for her long string of professional successes. It is due in large part to Nancy Tippins that my first term continued what has become

a time-honored tradition of dedicated public service for the people of south Alabama.

Mr. Speaker, while the retirement of Nancy Tippins marks a tremendous loss for my office and for her many friends in Washington, DC, it also marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter in Nancy's life. I ask my colleagues to join with me in saluting her for thirty years of exemplary public service to this body and to the people of Alabama. We extend to her our very best wishes and our heartfelt thanks for everything she has brought to this great city; my hope is for only the best of good health, happiness, and prosperity in the years ahead.

COMMENDING PALESTINIAN PEOPLE FOR HOLDING FREE AND FAIR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

SPEECH OF

HON. ROY BLUNT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 2, 2005

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, free democratic elections in the Middle East are vital to our security and to the security of our democratic allies. Later today we will take up a resolution on the remarkable exercise in democracy in Iraq last Sunday. In fact January was a strong month for democracy in the region. On January 9, the Palestinian people went to the polls to select a new president. This election, in which Mahmoud Abbas was elected president of the Palestinian Authority, occurred in the wake of an ongoing violent intifada against Israel; violence whose direct cause was a vacuum of credible leadership willing to confront terrorists in the West Bank and Gaza.

In December I traveled to Jerusalem and Ramallah to discuss preparations for the Palestinian presidential election. I found those Palestinian leaders I met to be eager to demonstrate to the world that their presidential election would be free and fair. And today we congratulate the Palestinian people for conducting a presidential election that has been widely regarded as both free and fair.

During the voting, Israel's efforts to balance the security of its people with easing the ability of Palestinians to vote in the West Bank and Gaza were vital to the success of the Palestinian election and Israel should be commended for its efforts.

The presidential election on January 9 represented a real opportunity for the Palestinian people to make a statement about their own future by rejecting violent and extremist leaders in favor of those who favor a moderate approach to lasting peace with Israel.

Today we commend President Mahmoud Abbas for his victory in the Palestinian presidential election. For many years the Palestinians have been without a leader committed to good faith negotiations toward peace with Israel. It is my sincere hope that the leadership of Mahmoud Abbas may finally change that.

The news today that the Israeli and Palestinian senior leaderships will hold a summit in Egypt is encouraging. We should all encourage this effort and hope that trust can be built among the region's leaders. However, as we have learned the hard way during this conflict, peace will not be achieved through words spoken at a table. A lasting peace will require patience, strong leadership, and above all a realistic approach to the underlying issues. Few of these qualities existed in the previous leader of the Palestinian Authority. It is not clear that they exist in Mahmoud Abbas, but we are hopeful.

While Mahmoud Abbas once renounced the use of terrorism during his premiership in