

has already distributed checks to dozens of armed individuals who claim to be former soldiers and who still refuse to turn in their weapons. Is this the conduct of a government that wants to disarm the thugs, or a government that supports them?

Human rights violations are commonplace throughout Haiti. Amnesty International has expressed serious concerns about arbitrary arrests, ill-treatment in detention centers, and summary executions attributed to members of the Haitian National Police. Several members of President Aristide's government and prominent supporters of Lavalas have been detained illegally, including former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune, former Interior Minister Jocelerme Privert, and Haitian singer Anne Auguste. As of February 18, there were over 700 political prisoners in Haiti's jails. Most of these prisoners have been held illegally for months without formal charges.

The incompetence of the interim government has manifested itself in other ways as well. Haiti's government was the only government in the path of Hurricane Jeanne that did not warn or evacuate its citizens when the storm came racing through the Caribbean last September. Jeanne pummeled the United States, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Barbados as a full-blown hurricane, and killed 34 people in all of those countries combined. She was only a tropical storm when she hit Haiti, but she killed over 3,000 Haitians and left thousands more hungry and homeless, because the interim government was unprepared to protect the Haitian people.

The Provisional Electoral Council, which is responsible for organizing elections, has been discredited by corruption. Roselor Julien, the former president of the Council, resigned last November, warning that other panel members were trying to rig the ballot and the council was not capable of ensuring the elections would be free and fair. The council also does not include any representatives of Lavalas, which continues to enjoy widespread support among the Haitian people despite the imprisonment of its leaders. It is abundantly clear that the council is incapable of organizing free and fair elections. If the current council does manage to organize elections, only the winners will accept the result.

The people of Haiti have suffered tremendously over the past year. They deserve better. They deserve to live in peace and security. They deserve to be warned when hurricanes are headed for their homes. They deserve to know that they can walk to work or buy groceries without having gangs kill them for the food they carry. And they deserve free, fair and democratic elections in which all political parties can participate.

When President Aristide was forced to leave Haiti a year ago, he was told that if he refused to leave, thousands of Haitians would die. Yet, in the 12 months that followed his departure, thousands of Haitians have died, and as long as the interim government continues to fail, there will be no end to the suffering and violence facing the Haitian people.

It is time for the United States Government to accept the fact that regime change has failed in Haiti. The United States must ensure that Haiti disarms the thugs, immediately frees political prisoners, and organizes free and fair elections in order to restore security and democracy to the Haitian people. The United States must also provide the necessary assistance to enable Haiti to reopen schools and hospitals and rebuild Haiti's infrastructure. It is time for the United States to clean up its mess.

SOCIAL SECURITY IS IMPORTANT
FOR WOMEN

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 02, 2005

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, today's debate is an extremely important conversation on the future of Social Security. The simple facts of the matter are that Social Security is not in a state of crisis, it will not go bankrupt and it will always be there for those who contribute to it. Unfortunately, the plans promoted by this Administration and my Republican colleagues do nothing to address the core issues related to the Trust Fund's solvency. Instead, the issue has been draped in rhetoric in pursuit of an ideological agenda that will not save Social Security but in fact will put it at greater risk. Americans across the country, from Kansas to California and from New Hampshire to New Mexico, whether black or white, man or woman, will have their benefits cut and the financial safety net removed from their retirement. While Republican proposals will hurt everyone, women are particularly at risk. As Republicans regale us with misleading statements and flowery predictions, the cold hard facts of reality reveals a somber picture.

More than 24 million women receive Social Security benefits. They make up 58 percent of seniors who receive Social Security and without it, 53 percent of all senior women would be poor. In 2000, Social Security saved seven million women from poverty. More than seven million women receive disability or survivor benefits. These numbers deserve our undivided attention. The current proposal would

cut these benefits by more than 40 percent over the coming decades. If the President's plan were put in to effect, trillions of dollars would be taken out of Social Security, endangering the benefits of current retirees and people with disabilities. These are Americans who have contributed to the Trust Fund their entire working lives and now their guaranteed benefits are endangered. For years we have looked out for our fellow Americans, to lift them up and prove to them that no man, woman or child, regardless of race, religion, or socioeconomic status, will be left behind. Never in my 24 years in Congress have I seen such disregard for our countrymen and women. In a time when we are asking so many to sacrifice so much, this Administration appears ready to dismantle an incredibly successful and equitable program. At the same time, the President's tax policy will cost 3 to 5 times as much as the shortfall predicted by the Social Security Administration (SSA). The Medicare Program is already running a shortfall that is almost 8 times as much as Social Security.

This effort will do nothing to address the real problems facing the Social Security Trust Fund. Social Security plays a unique role in the lives of women. We know women live longer than men and make less in the workplace. Rather than ensure that the Social Security Trust Fund can provide for these women and their families, the Administration wants to cut benefits and create a risky privatization plan that does not guarantee a livable rate of return.

Social Security is truly one of our greatest success stories, virtually eliminating poverty for the aged. While we all agree that important concerns about Social Security should be effectively addressed, I do not believe turning this matter into a crisis should force us to accept what would otherwise be unacceptable. I am concerned that the scenarios suggested by the Administration do not serve us well as we conduct this domestic policy debate. Manufacturing a crisis with an ideological agenda is unacceptable.

Social Security is the core of old-age support and was intended as an income supplement and a crucial safety net for seniors, not a money making scheme. We must preserve Social Security through sound fiscal discipline and legitimate policy adjustments to meet the demands of future generations. Instead of weakening Social Security I believe that it should be strengthened and made more secure ensuring its success for generations to come. We cannot turn Social Security into Social Insecurity.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate on February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place, and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled, and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, March 3, 2005 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MARCH 7

2 p.m.
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Michael Jackson, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security.
SD-342

MARCH 8

9:30 a.m.
Armed Services
To hold hearings to examine military strategy and operational requirements in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2006.
SH-216

Judiciary
To hold hearings to examine the nomination of Thomas B. Griffith, of Utah, to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit.
SD-226

Rules and Administration
To hold hearings to examine S. 271, to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to clarify when organizations described in section 527 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 must register as political committees.
SR-301

10 a.m.
Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
To hold hearings to examine the reauthorization of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.
SD-106

Energy and Natural Resources
Public Lands and Forests Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine S. 179, to provide for the exchange of land within the Sierra National Forest, California, S. 213, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain Federal land to Rio Arriba County, New Mexico, S. 267, to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, and S. 305, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to recruit volunteers to assist with or facilitate the activities of various agencies and offices of the Department of the Interior.
SD-366

2 p.m.
Veterans' Affairs
To hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Veterans Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of the Disabled American Veterans.
345 CHOB

2:30 p.m.
Energy and Natural Resources
To hold hearings to examine ways to encourage the diversification of power generation resources.
SD-366

Foreign Relations
European Affairs Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine the future of democracy in the Black Sea area.
SD-419

Judiciary
Terrorism, Technology and Homeland Security Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine terrorism and the electromagnetic pulse (EMP) threat to homeland security.
SD-226

3 p.m.
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
To hold hearings to examine the challenges facing the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2005, focusing on security and human rights.
SD-192

MARCH 9

9:30 a.m.
Indian Affairs
Business meeting to consider S. 147, to express the policy of the United States regarding the United States relationship with Native Hawaiians and to provide a process for the recognition by the United States of the Native Hawaiian governing entity; to be followed by an oversight hearing on trust reform.
SR-485

10 a.m.
Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
Business meeting to consider the nomination of Ronald Rosenfeld, of Oklahoma, to be a Director of the Federal Housing Finance Board; to be followed by a hearing to examine the state of the securities industry.
SD-538

Energy and Natural Resources
To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Patricia Lynn Scarlett, of California, to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior, and Jeffrey Clay Sell, of Texas, to be Deputy Secretary of Energy.
SD-366

Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
Business meeting to consider S. 250, to amend the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 to improve the Act, the Caring for Children Act of 2005, S. 172, to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to provide for the regulation of all contact lenses as medical devices, the Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Act of 2005, and any nominations ready for action.
SD-430

Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2006 for the Department of Homeland Security.
SD-342

Veterans' Affairs
To hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Veterans Affairs to ex-

amine the legislative presentation of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.
SH-216

MARCH 10

10 a.m.
Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
To continue hearings to examine the reauthorization of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.
SR-328A

Veterans' Affairs
To hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Veterans Affairs to examine the legislative presentations of the Blinded Veterans Association, the Non-Commissioned Officers Association, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, the Paralyzed Veterans of America and the Jewish War Veterans.
345 CHOB

MARCH 15

9:30 a.m.
Armed Services
To resume hearings to examine military strategy and operational requirements from combatant commanders in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2006.
SD-106

MARCH 17

9:30 a.m.
Armed Services
To hold hearings to examine current and future worldwide threats to the national security of the United States; to be followed by a closed hearing in SH-219.
SD-106

10 a.m.
Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Oceans, Fisheries and Coast Guard Subcommittee
To hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2006 for the Coast Guard Operational Readiness/Mission Balance.
SR-253

APRIL 14

10 a.m.
Veterans' Affairs
To hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Veterans Affairs to examine the legislative presentations of the Military Officers Association of America, the National Association of State Director of Veterans Affairs, AMVETS, the American Ex-Prisoners of War, and Vietnam Veterans of America.
345 CHOB

APRIL 21

10 a.m.
Veterans' Affairs
To hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Veterans Affairs to examine the legislative presentations of the Fleet Reserve Association, the Air Force Sergeants Association, the Retired Enlisted Association, and the Gold Star Wives of America.
345 CHOB

SEPTEMBER 20

10 a.m.
Veterans' Affairs
To hold joint hearings with the House Committee on Veterans Affairs to examine the legislative presentation of the American Legion.
345 CHOB