

if Love Field had remained an unrestricted airport. The best proof of that statement is evidenced by the 21 empty gates currently vacant at DFW. Despite any attractive incentives, DFW has been unable to attract new, low-cost tenants because of the discussion of repealing the Wright amendment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, once again it is an honor to address this great House of Representatives. I want to thank not only the Democratic leader but the Democratic leadership for allowing me to be here on their behalf.

Our 30-something Working Group, which the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) put together in the 108th Congress, our focus is to work on issues that are facing not only young Americans but Americans in general. I think it is very, very important for us to state not only here on the floor but to also say in our communities and the workplace that there is no greater service than making sure that your children and grandchildren have a better opportunity than what you have had. That is kind of the unwritten statement for the 30-something Working Group. We are benefactors of the generation that allowed us to have better opportunities than what they have had. I think that is what makes our

country great. I commend those Members that live with that philosophy.

But I think it is important in a time of judgment and a time that we all have to be leaders that we stand up, not only stand up, but inform the American people and future generations on what is going to happen good for them and in many cases what may not work out the way that is being portrayed here in the Congress or any issue that we are talking about here, that we are taking action on here in Washington, D.C.

There are a lot of good things that families are doing for one another to make sure that future generations and their bloodline have a better opportunity than what they have had. There are families that are trying to save money with a college plan or savings plan for their children to receive education for their bloodline for the first time. Some families that only made it after a 4-year experience stopped at an associate's degree or a bachelor's of science degree, and want their children or a family member to be able to receive a master's degree or a doctor's degree.

□ 1830

It is that individual in the middle of America that wants his or her son or daughter to be able to carry the family business further than they were ever capable to carry it. I know that it is in the fiber of our American Dream that is in our hearts and in our minds.

So when we start talking about the issue of Social Security, we have to say that that is a paramount issue when we talk about values and commitment to our future generations, we talk about value and commitment to those beneficiaries that are receiving Social Security benefits right now. We have to think about those individuals that are disabled that are counting on this Congress to stand up on their behalf, those individuals that elect us to speak on their behalf.

One thing about this body within the U.S. Congress, we cannot be appointed to the House. We cannot be appointed to this position. We have to be elected. The other body can be appointed. We have to be elected. Through the election process, there is a lot of commitment and sacrifice. A lot of Americans, someone woke up early one morning, 7 a.m., and showed up to their election polling place for some accountability. That is what we are here to do.

When we start talking about Social Security, I think it is important that we come to this floor to let the American people know and the Members of this House of Representatives know that many of us within the Congress are very, very concerned about the privatization scheme that is being talked about and that is being portrayed as a plan for future generations, or the preservation of Social Security.

We cannot believe everything we hear, especially when folks start saying, well, these are the facts and this is

my plan and this is the way it is going to work. Right now, especially on the Democratic side, and I will say a few of my Republican colleagues understand that 48 million Americans are receiving Social Security right now, that 33 million of those Americans are already retired, 33 million that are counting on Social Security. Social Security is that security blanket, our end of the deal that we said we would hold, they paid into it, it is there for them and it will be there for them for the next 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 years at the same level that it is right now.

Of course we want to strengthen Social Security. Also, it is important to understand that right now, today, \$955 per month on average goes out every month to support families and support their unmet needs. This is not a giveaway. This is what they paid for. This is what they invested in. It is important that we do not gamble with those dollars. I think it is also important to understand that 48 percent of Social Security beneficiaries, if they did not have Social Security, they would be living in poverty today.

So, Mr. Speaker, I cannot help but have trouble with the administration's plan and some Members on the Republican side's plan to privatize Social Security and to say and admit up front that benefits will be cut and that they would not only receive a benefit cut but even those who do not want to go in a private account will suffer.

I cannot understand for the life of me how we can serve that up on a platter and say that we are trying to help future generations or present enrollees in Social Security right now. I cannot help but question \$5 trillion. Until I got to the Congress, I had no meaning of what \$5 trillion actually meant, \$5 trillion, not of money that we have in our wallets but money that we are willing to borrow, \$5 trillion. But better yet, this is supposed to help maintain Social Security.

I am going to talk a little further about what we are doing as Democrats, but I would like to yield to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding. I actually want to commend him because I see him week after week on the floor leading the group under-30 as they demonstrate that you do not have to be a senior citizen, that you do not have to be old and elderly, you do not have to have been here 25 years to have impact on this body. And so I thank the gentleman from Florida for yielding, but I also commend him for his leadership and for his position as he talks about Social Security, one of the great programs that has bolstered the quality of life for people in our country.

I actually grew up in a rural community in Arkansas before moving to Chicago, and we had a saying there, that if it ain't broke, don't fix it. They would oftentimes be talking about farm machinery and other kinds of things.

While Social Security is not quite the same, the reality is if it is working for millions and millions of people, if it has been the only thing that has stood between our senior citizens in many instances and absolute poverty, then it sounds to me like it ain't really broke. And while it might can be adjusted just a little taste, we may have to put some money in, I do not think it is broken, and I do not think we need to fix it.

GLOBALISM HITS THE CHICAGO LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND

I want to take just a few minutes, if I could, and talk about something else for a minute, that is, about an industry in my congressional district that is being squeezed by our trade policy, by globalism, by outsourcing and all of the things that we seriously have to look at. That industry is the Chicago Lighthouse Industries. They have made clocks for the Federal Government for the last 28 years. They have been consistent and diligent in their performance. Since 1977, the Chicago Lighthouse made 3.3 million clocks. In fact, last year they made 104,000 clocks for all branches of the military, Energy Department, Postal Service, and the Justice Department.

The unique thing about the Chicago Lighthouse is that they employ more than 40 people who are blind or visually impaired. They employ their workers at a salary of \$8.50 an hour and provide health benefits. On a recent visit to the Chicago Lighthouse, I was amazed at the level of detail and speed at which the workers developed the clocks. They have an assembly line that produces and packages 1,000 wall clocks a day. And, of course, they are blind. They are visually impaired.

In fact, Rita McCabe can assemble a 12-inch clock in less than a minute. Ms. McCabe, who is blind, found her job through the Chicago Lighthouse. When asked how she felt about her job, she stated the following: "It gives me a chance to be with people, to make a living on my own, and to prove that I'm competent enough to do this kind of work." Ms. McCabe has worked for the Chicago Lighthouse for 25 years.

Rita McCabe's job is in jeopardy due to competition from foreign sources. In the past 4 years, U.S. imports of wall clocks, most of them from China, have increased by 24 percent, totaling \$123 million in 2003. The Chicago Lighthouse does not mind competition. They have suggested that they can compete with anybody as long as the rules are the same. Unfortunately, the playing field is not level when it comes to competing with China and other countries that do not have a minimum wage requirement or pay health benefits to their workers.

The Chicago Lighthouse, though, pays its workers an average of \$8.50 an hour plus health benefits. It is not uncommon in China for workers to make \$2 an hour and have no benefits. China is able to undercut clock manufacturers like the Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind because they do not play by the

same rules. They are able to send their products into the United States at a cheaper price. This adds to the trade deficit that currently exists. More importantly, to allow foreign governments who do not pay minimum wage or a livable wage, nor provide benefits, to continue to undercut U.S. companies like the Chicago Lighthouse erodes the faith that citizens have in government and puts too many jobs at risk.

The Chicago Lighthouse is not asking for preferential treatment. They are just seeking fundamental fairness. The Chicago Lighthouse has been in existence now for 99 years. They have done something right to be able to survive.

The Federal Government as a result of the Javitz-Wagner-O'Day Act is required to show favor towards the Chicago Lighthouse and other industries like it when purchasing clocks through the General Services Administration. However, this law has been eroded and many Federal purchasers are going for the lower-priced clocks. Obviously, these are the clocks that are being produced through cheaper labor costs. The Federal Government must set the example and ensure that taxpayer money is going to support those industries and businesses in our country and not going to other countries who take the benefit of our outsourcing policy.

Everything comes at a price. The workers at the Chicago Lighthouse are able to be productive, tax-paying citizens because of their jobs. These jobs help support them. And so I simply want to have us understand and recognize that when we make a trade policy, when we are outsourcing, when we are always looking for the cheapest price, when we are always looking for the most cost-efficient way of doing business, we also better look at the needs of our people and we better look at the needs of the people in our communities to provide opportunities for blind people to work, to have dignity, to have pride, to have a sense of self-worth. We should not let anything erode that. We should not let anything take that away.

I would urge us as we purchase, as we continue to purchase clocks, as we make trade policies, that we remember something the Bible says: "Where there is no vision, the people perish." And some people can see, but have no vision. Sometimes our policies reflect the ability to see, but not in a visionary way.

So, please, America, let us not put the people at the Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind out of work. Let us keep them working and hopefully all of the rest of us will be able to see.

I thank the gentleman again so very much. I really appreciate the gentleman giving me the opportunity to cut into this under-30 group's time. It has been a long time since I have been under 30, but it is just a pleasure to be here with the gentleman, and I thank him so very much.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I just want to say before I comment to what the gentleman from Illinois just said, I want to commend him for coming to the floor, not only representing his great district but representing some great Americans that are doing what they can under the circumstances. I have a similar program in my district, Good Will Industries, providing uniforms for our men and women that are in uniform, sewing together jackets. They are handicapped, some physically handicapped, mentally handicapped, many; but they are trying, and we have got to give them an opportunity to play a role in working America.

Another thing I want to also point out, and I know that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is here, is that the gentleman from Illinois is talking about working Americans, not folks sitting at home talking about where's my check. These are individuals that wake up every day and want to wake up every day and go and be productive. That is what this is all about. That is what our democracy is about.

It was a pleasure yielding to the gentleman. He is one of the most outstanding orators that we have in the Congress.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. The next time you are in Chicago, I have just got to bring you by so that you can go and see the Chicago Lighthouse for yourself. And we will bring the gentleman from Ohio along with us.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I look forward to that. Just not in the winter time, that is all I have to say, because I am from Florida. I do not know about all Chicago, holding on to the ropes and the wind blowing and everything. I love Chicago. I thank the gentleman from Illinois for standing up for those great Americans.

□ 1845

Mr. Speaker, I am so glad that the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is here. And we are, I tell the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS), the 30-something Working Group; so he can be 30-something, not under 30 or I think I would not be with this group. I would be with them in spirit.

Mr. Speaker, I was just talking here for a moment about the whole issue of a bad privatization scheme and throwing the dice on the retirement of so many not only Americans that are presently receiving Social Security benefits, and I am not just talking about retirees. We are talking about disabled Americans. We are also talking about those individuals who are going to school and surviving on survivor benefits of Americans that have passed on. They paid into Social Security. They knew there were survivor benefits for their kids. And one can ask even those Americans and those of us in the Congress that were pension funds outside of this Congress and we know what happened to our pension fund. It went straight down.

The gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) our ranking member on the Committee on Education and the Workforce, said just today that airline pilots who were receiving \$12,000 a month in pension benefits, now it is down to \$2,000 a month. That is a \$10,000 difference in their retirement. So now we are going to do that with Social Security? Even for those individuals who do not enroll in the program, they are still going to get benefit cuts. They still receive benefits cuts. And, also, the dollars that are needed to support them in their time of need.

So it is a great pleasure once again being with my good friend from Ohio and the fact that we come to this floor along with the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ), the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. DAVIS), and others to share with Americans about what we are working on here in the Congress.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

I think it is appropriate for us tonight to kind of take another tack, a little more specific. We know that the President's privatization plan for the Social Security system is a bad one. It means benefit cuts across the board to the tune of 40 percent for most. Under the President's plan, middle-class workers earning \$58,000 a year would be hit with a 42 percent benefit cut. And the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. DAVIS), who was here last week, said very eloquently that this Social Security system is a system that is put together and was put together to solidify the country and to talk about our common interests, our common goals, and our common humanity, and how we have an obligation in this Congress to maintain that system and not to say and begin to promote the kind of attitude that says, hey, everybody is on their own. They go here and they make the kind of money that they want. They invest in the stock market, and if they go belly up in the stock market, they are on their own. And that is basically what the President's plan says.

We have a system that works, a system that is a safety net for many American people who have struggled. But the point I think we need to make tonight, which we have touched upon over and over and over again, is the issue of jobs in the United States of America. If we are not participating in an economy that is growing, there are not going to be the kind of resources put into the program.

I was at a town hall meeting on Social Security a couple of weeks ago, and I had a lady stand up, my age, and say "I do not want to put 4 percent of my Social Security taxes into a private account" because she figured out the math. She makes \$19,000 a year. Four

percent of \$19,000 a year is not enough to retire on even if the stock market is going gangbusters.

So this may sound nice to have private accounts. If one is making \$150,000 a year, they know how to invest their money. They know how to pull it out and put it back in. The President's plan does not allow that. So if we say the same exact thing to someone who is making \$19,000 and they are allowed to invest their 4 percent of \$19,000 a year, there is not going to be enough there for them to retire, and they are going to lose their Social Security benefit.

This is a risky proposition, and it is why only 30 percent of the American people are saying this is a good idea. It makes me become more and more aware and concerned that this is a whole ploy. While we are cutting food stamps and we are cutting Medicaid, we have the whole country having this debate about Social Security over here. And we do not want to talk about what is going on in Iraq, and we do not want to talk about the kind of cuts that are being made in the veterans' health care program. We have to keep the discussion on an issue that is highly volatile and has been known to be a third rail of politics.

Now, I want to share with the American people and our friends who are here tonight a chart. We are talking about jobs and job creation in the country. This chart shows the U.S. trade balance in goods, durable goods. This goes from 1979 to 2004. In 1979 we had a trade deficit of \$24 billion, in 1979. And we do not really need to see the numbers. We just need to see the bars. And it slowly got worse, got better in the early 1990s and then the dipsy-do all throughout the 1990s. But in 1998 our trade deficit in goods got to \$230 billion. That was in 1998. And then from 1998 to 2004, a \$651 billion trade deficit in the United States of America. We are buying \$651 billion more worth of goods than we are selling.

If we want to fix Social Security and we want to have enough money in our local communities to fund our schools and our libraries and Medicaid at the State and Federal level, we need to fix this problem, or we are never going to have enough money to do anything. Four percent of whatever one wants to put in their side account is never going to be enough because we are going to have more people for 19 and 20 and \$30,000 a year than we are for 70 or 80 or 90. And this is the main culprit.

And today Secretary Snow came out with the weakest report on the Chinese currency manipulation that we have ever seen and basically gave the Chinese a free pass when they are manipulating their currency by 40 percent. That is why this number looks like it does.

I am going to get the other chart out here that is dealing with annual trade with China. There are three different graphs here. The gold graph, the gold line, with the blue dots is what we are

importing from China. This starts off in 1985; it ends up in 2004. The blue line is what we are exporting to China, and then the trade balance. What we are importing from China is going through the roof, \$200 billion of goods coming into this country. We are exporting to China virtually nothing. The trade gap just with the Chinese is \$162 billion; \$162 billion we are buying from the Chinese without the ability to sell.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Ohio's (Mr. RYAN) point as it relates to pointing out the trade deficit is the fact that Americans, if we allow hypothetically, and I do mean hypothetically, in this Congress a privatization plan to go through this Congress the way the President and majority side would like to see it happen, then they are going to get a double whammy. They are getting a double whammy of not having high-paying jobs. And this is not just me talking. Folks can go to a number of third-party validators and even the White House itself said there will be drastic benefits cuts, benefits cuts to the tune of if someone is earning \$37,000, they are going to get a 28 percent benefit cut than what they are experiencing right now. At \$58,000, they are going to get a 42 percent benefit cut, and on and on and on. So there will be benefit cuts, and we have put that up front, and there will be a great gamble on the future of Social Security.

So I am really pleased that the gentleman brought those charts because folks really need to understand, and this is from the U.S. Census Bureau. That is where he received that information.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. We are not making this up, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. This is not the "Tim Ryan Report."

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. This is not the "Kendrick Meek Report."

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I just want to make sure because we point out when there is inaccurate information out there. And some of our friends here in the Beltway, which is Washington, D.C. they have an imagination about what the truth is about. We talk a lot about what the truth really is. We talk a lot about the \$350 billion so-called prescription drug plan that is supposed to help Americans, and now it is \$724 billion, but we were told \$350 billion when it first started. So the President is saying \$5 trillion on a privatization plan. What is it going to be next year? Is it going to be \$10 trillion?

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, he brings up a great point because over the next 10 years, and I do not know if he said this before I arrived, in the next 10 years we are going to have to borrow \$2 trillion to fund this privatization scheme. Over the next 20 years we are going to have to borrow \$5 trillion. This is billion. We have to borrow \$5 trillion to fund this privatization

scheme. So it is just brilliant that he brought that up in such a timely fashion because it ties into this.

As we are running a \$162 billion trade deficit with the Chinese at the same time that they are stealing our manufacturing, stealing our jobs, we are borrowing the money right now for our annual deficit that we have, from the Chinese, \$500 billion.

So what do we have to do to fix this problem? One, we have to balance the budget. But if we are already borrowing \$500 billion from the Japanese and the Chinese, why would we then go out and say let us go borrow another \$5 trillion to roll the dice on and play roulette?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, that is the problem. This Social Security, it is not some small little program that a Member of Congress put in the budget and said this is our pet project. This is Social Security. This goes towards our generation for our children and grandchildren, and I hope to have them some day, grandchildren. I want them to have a better opportunity.

The gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) came to the floor to talk about those individuals putting together clocks in his district, the Lighthouse Project. I yield to him, from the 30-something Working Group hour, to give him an opportunity, and he did not come here saying we need to create a program for people who do not want to work. We need to make sure that Americans, and he is talking about blind Americans, are able to continue to support themselves.

Remember, Mr. Speaker, 33 million Americans are retired, receiving Social Security benefits now. Forty-eight percent of the 33 million would be living in poverty if it was not for Social Security. And they have a plan that comes up here to the Hill. And I would not call it a plan. I would say it is some sort of philosophy or theory that the White House and majority side have.

And I would also like to say, Mr. Speaker, we know that we have friends over there, few in number, on the Republican side that are willing to stand up and say, I am not with you on this.

□ 1900

And if you bring it to the floor, I am going to vote against it, rightfully so. Do we know why? Do we know why it is not on the floor tonight? Because I believe, just like the American people know and just like many Members of this House know, it is not because we are Democrats and we are right; we are Democrats and we are willing to stand up to say what is right for Social Security. This is not a political issue; this is an American issue.

So when we start talking about what people are saying here on the floor as it relates to the majority side, we do know we were given that prescription drug number, \$350 billion, it ended up being \$724 billion and climbing, and still did not put forth a plan where we

can combine buying power and take the price down for seniors.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, that is exactly right. We are going on the record of what this administration has consistently told us and told the American people, and the gentleman is exactly right. With the prescription drug benefit we were told it was \$350 billion, then it became \$400 billion, we passed it at 3 in the morning here. Then a month or two later, after the election, it turned out to be \$700 billion, and then it went to \$1.1 trillion. When we passed it, it was \$400 billion. And someone in this administration told the actuary who had the real numbers, do not tell Congress.

Wait a minute. That is not telling the American people. I represent 700,000 people; the gentleman represents 700,000 people.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. And change.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. They withheld the administration from your constituents and my constituents, and we made a faulty decision here on the House floor where many Members would not have voted for it. When we go back and look at the war, what we were told about the war: we are greeted as liberators, we will use the oil for reconstruction and it will only cost us \$50 billion when we have already over \$300 billion invested in the war; all of these things that turned out not to be true.

Here we are today being promised a scheme that we have to borrow \$5 trillion to implement. It is bad enough we have to borrow it and pay it back; we have to pay the interest on it too. Talk about sticking it to the next generation.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, let me just say this. We are both going to be in the Committee on Armed Services tomorrow late into the night marking up or creating the Committee on Armed Services for the United States of America authorization bill to protect the American public, to make sure our men and women that are in harm's way get what they need, to make sure that we do all of the things that we need to do to defend this country, adding \$5 trillion to the debt and making decisions that should not be made.

And I just want to say, at the end of the legislative business of every week, we have our whip, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) come to the floor with the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), and they talk about the business of next week and what is going to happen. I hope when it comes down to Social Security that there is a bipartisan effort to not only make sure that we pay for what we do or have a plan to pay for what we do as it relates to borrowing the money that we are going to have to use to make sure that we make Social Security stronger and better, but there is no discussion about, well, next week we are going to talk about private accounts, because that is going to be a sad day in this Congress.

I will also say this, that it is important for people to understand that on the Democratic side, and I mentioned the gentlewoman from California (Leader PELOSI) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), who is our chair, and the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN), who is our vice-chair, and other Members who are here with leadership roles and who have been here before the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) and I, before we even thought of a 30-something Working Group; that a bipartisan plan like the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) speaks of all the time, consists of Democrats and Republicans sitting down, sharing values on behalf of the American people, and putting forth a plan that will preserve Social Security for years to come.

Social Security news flash, I say to the gentleman, because if we listen to what the White House is saying and all of the Federal jet fuel they are burning flying all around the country sharing with people what their side of what they believe the crystal ball may actually provide Social Security benefits to future generations, 47 years from now, 100 percent benefits as we see them now will still be in place. Forty-seven years from now, Social Security will be still be here. Do my colleagues know why? Because in 1983 this House, in a bipartisan way, Tip O'Neill, President of the United States Ronald Reagan, God bless his memory, voted off of this floor 243 to 102 to make sure that Social Security is there for future generations and that it provides benefits to the 48 million, those who are disabled, those who are living under survivor benefits, and those who are retired right now. It took leadership to do that.

So it all comes down to, if some Members of power, and this would not even be a discussion if we were in the majority. It would not even be a discussion, because there will be a panel put together to come up to the Committee on Ways and Means and other committees of substance as it relates to this issue to come together with a bipartisan plan.

And I guarantee my colleagues that private accounts would not even be an issue on the preservation of Social Security. We have always talked about making sure that the Social Security trust fund that has been a Democratic issue from two or three Presidential campaigns, about making sure that Social Security is here for future generations.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Lockbox.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Whatever we want to call it. I will just say that this bipartisan number here, 163 Democrats for it in 1983, 80 Republicans for it in 1983, and Tip O'Neill, the Democratic Speaker of this House was sitting in the Speaker rostrum, Mr. Speaker. It took leadership, and that is what we need now.

Folks ask, I say to the gentleman, what is the Democratic plan. Well, the Democratic plan is in the wallets of every American, the guarantee when they go through their wallet looking for lunch money for their children or looking for bus fare to catch the bus or, as we know, grabbing, unfortunately, for a credit card now versus cash to put gas in your tank, when they pass that Social Security card, what they know now is the fact that they will receive benefits for the next 47 years.

That is the Democratic plan, and the Democratic plan is also making sure in a bipartisan way that we move forward, make sure that we preserve Social Security for future generations, and make sure that we do not hand debt to our future generations.

Mr. Speaker, \$5 trillion is an awful lot of money. Once again, on the armed services end, 44 percent of our debt is owned by foreign interests. If we want to talk about the future of this country, if we want to talk about security, if we want to talk about homeland security, if we want to talk about financial security, stability for this country and for the Republic, never before in the history of the Republic has the deficit been as high as it is right now.

Now, I can tell my colleagues, our friends on the other side, and I say the leadership, because I know, some of my good friends do not want this.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Not personal. It is not personal.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. It is not a personal issue. And they know it is not a personal issue. They know that bad decisions have been made. They know that the deficit is as high as it has ever been, and climbing. We are so high up in debt right now, I mean, it is just bad. We cannot call these 1-800 numbers we see on the TV saying call us, we will help you with your debt. We cannot even take care of those issues right now, because it is so much and we are so high in debt.

So I think it is important, as we remember 30-somethings and those young Americans who are graduating from college now, Mr. Speaker, they are leaving, on average, \$20,000 in debt, \$20,000 in debt, the average American that is graduating. Now we are going to put more on them? I think that is something that we should not do, and that is the reason why we come to the floor. That is the reason why we have third, fourth, fifth, and six-party validators for the reason that this privatization plan is nothing but a pure gamble for Democrats, Republicans, Independents, and others that are depending and looking for Social Security when they are in need.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman brought up a great point, and we will share some more information from the Department of the Treasury of the United States of America. This is the national debt, and I believe this is moving. You can go to a Web site, next week we will have to bring

the Web site up so you can see, but this is actually always moving: \$7.79 trillion in debt that the United States owes other interests. Your share of the debt, I say to the gentleman from Florida, \$26,349.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Not just mine. Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Not just yourself. Your wife, your kids, my wife, constituents, people watching at home, if you are watching this program.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Members of Congress.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Everybody, \$26,300 you owe.

The point I would like to bring up and highlight again is what the gentleman brought up, talking about what college students owe. The average college student owes 20,000 bucks.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would just yield for one second, not just the college students, but their parents. I want to tell my colleague, when I graduated from college, I went straight into the Highway Patrol Academy. Thank God I had a full scholarship to Florida A&M. But a number of students that go into college, they do not have a scholarship, okay? And they come out owing student loans. And do we know who pays those student loans when they come out? Mom and Dad or Grandmom, to make sure that they do not end up falling into bad debt and also falling into an area where they are going to start off on the wrong foot.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Yes, even further behind. So someone out there watching, a parent that has a kid in college, the average college debt, \$20,000; average share of the national debt that you owe, \$26,000.

And, think about it, if you are having a baby this year and project this number out, if we keep going down the road we are going down, because we already had to lift the debt ceiling in Congress several months ago that raised this even further so the United States could go back out and borrow even more money, so here we have a situation where we owe this, each individual owes this.

Now, if a baby is born today, guess what? They owe this right out of the gate. So project this out, this number, \$26,349, project it out 18, 20, 22 years and imagine what that number is going to be if we keep going down the road we are going down now, and then add to that what college tuition costs are going to be 20 years from now. They have doubled over the past 4 or 5 years, I know for sure in Ohio, and I know in Florida, so let that rate continue and let this rate continue and let us keep borrowing money and have to pay interest on that. Let that continue.

So we are saying that a young baby that is born today has a tremendous tax burden on their head, from the national debt that they owe, their share, plus what they are going to owe for going to college; and if they go on to get a master's degree or advanced degree, it would be even more, and then

the President's proposal to borrow \$5 trillion more. What are we doing to the next generation? At the same time, we are not making the proper investments in health and education and the kinds of things that will eventually move the country forward.

Mr. Speaker, the Web site is www.house.gov/budget.democrats underscored, to get the deficit ticker to see what the real number is as this continues to move.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I think this is very, very important since we are talking about the future and we are talking about future generations, and we must talk about these numbers so future generations understand what their debt is.

For someone that is looking for additional help on Pell grants, that is not going to happen in any significant number. It is going to make a difference to your overall debt situation or credit situation. When you also look at the issue of Social Security from the beginning, remember, remember, \$5 trillion to help save you money over the next 20 years. That is a lot of money, okay? It is going to stop us from doing the things we need to do in taking the debt down. It was the Democratic Congress here that made the hard decision to take down the debt and put us into surpluses as far as the eye could see, and then the Republican Congress took over and took us down into debt.

I think it is also important, and we always like to give the Members third-party validators, and I want you to write this Web site down: www.cbpp.org. That is the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the Center For Budget and Policy Priorities. There is a lot of good information on that Web site. It gives not only Members but the American people good information on what someone may earn and how much of a benefit cut they are going to receive; not a benefit increase, but a benefit cut. And in this whole debate, there is no, there is no discussion about an increase. There is no discussion about some of the positive things that can happen outside of saying, this will be good for the trust fund in the future.

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I also want to say that, you know, that I have no real problem with what is going on in New York and the whole Wall Street experience. Okay? Do not think that I have a problem with it. But I do have a problem, which the only entity or institution, or even if Wall Street was a perfect person, to be the only group that would benefit from a privatization plan, some \$940 billion guaranteed to Wall Street, not necessarily to the individuals that are enrolled in Social Security.

And I thought while the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) was talking, as you know I have my papers, we get our briefings, and we call and we ask institutions that are studying this Social

Security privatization scheme to give us information as we work on ways to push this Congress towards a bipartisan approach to Social Security without private accounts. That is something that we are doing here as Democrats.

But I look, and I want to tell you, in your State there are a number of individuals, 315,000 survivor beneficiaries, 278,000 individuals that are receiving disability benefits. I think it is also important to understand, even in my State, in Florida, you have 450,679 that are receiving disability benefits and 408,543 that are receiving survivor benefits.

Even in the State of Pennsylvania just north of us, survivor benefits, these are individuals that their children are now beneficiaries from the work that their parents did. They didn't have anything to leave them, but they had Social Security to leave them, to help be there for them, because they wanted to be there for them financially, but that was a part of our deal with Americans that we will make sure that not only will they be taken care of, that we will have security for them, but for their children.

And in the State of Pennsylvania 353,000 survivor beneficiaries, and also you have 336,000 individuals that are on disability.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. The same in Ohio. 315,000 folks that receive survivor benefits. 16 percent of people who receive a Social Security check in Ohio, 16 percent of them are survivor benefits. So this is a program that helps people who lose a parent at a very young age, they are under the age of 18 and they need a little assistance.

And that is what the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. DAVIS) talked about last week is a sense of community where we are going to have a system that protects and looks out for each other, gets each other's back. I think it is very important that we recognize that Social Security is really the best system, because it inherently embodies what is best about the country, and I think it is great.

I want to just raise a question here. We are kind of running out of time here. We only have a few more minutes left. We have a little bit of time.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. We have about 10 minutes.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. But we have less than we had when we started, and we are closer to the end than we are to the beginning, so I am going to try to make a final point or two towards the end here.

The question really, and I want to ask the people at home, is this: What do you think, someone watching at home or if you are having a discussion with your friends over dinner, or your family over dinner tonight, what do you think the greatest crisis is in the United States of America?

What do you think this Chamber and our friends across the hall and the White House, what do you think we

should be focusing on? Do you think that this problem that is 47 years away or 40 years away or 35 years away? We have all kinds of different numbers, we will give you the benefit, say 35 years away. Do you think that is the greatest problem facing the country, or do you think that the 40-some million Americans without health insurance, maybe that is the greatest crisis facing the country, or do you think the rising costs of health insurance, if you are a small business owner, or you are in a union and you are trying to negotiate a contract or you are trying to run a school system, and you are the superintendent or you are the teacher, maybe that is the greatest crisis facing the country.

How about, and I am sure in your district just like mine, Youngstown City Schools, Akron City Schools, Cleveland City Schools, 80, 85 percent of the kids qualify for free and reduced lunch. Maybe that is a more imminent crisis than a Social Security issue that is, you know, 40 years out.

And I just ask the American people to ask themselves, what do you think the great crisis is in the country today? The fact that the trade deficits, the debt, the annual deficits that we are running? To me, I share my opinion, those are the issues. That 85 percent of the kids in a school district in Ohio qualify for free and reduced lunch, that 50 or 60 or 70 percent of those kids live below the poverty line. That to me is a crisis.

How are we going to compete with the Chinese workers? How are we going to compete with the Indians if we are not able to educate our kids and our kids are living in poverty? To me that is the crisis. That people do not get the kind of health care that they deserve, that if you have a lot of money and you are able to get yourself into the Cleveland Clinic or some of the great hospitals around the country, you are going to be fine, but if not you are on your own.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I think it is important not only that the Members, but the American people understand, Mr. Speaker, that when it comes down to health care we are going to be okay. The reason why we are going to be okay is because we are Members of Congress.

Not because of our health plan, but because of our last name. And that is a crisis for real Americans, because my constituents they sit in the emergency room for hours. I walk into the emergency room, believe me, I can barely sit down before someone grabs my arm and says, Congressman, please let us check you out.

All right. When I need to get prescription drugs, I can get prescription drugs. When I want to get a doctor's appointment, I can get a doctor's appointment. I do not have to wait 6 months to see an ophthalmologist or an optometrist, whoever it may be, to see them.

I think what the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) said in the last 5 or 6

minutes meant so much in this entire hour of really talking about the issues, where the rubber meets the road. And the reality of this argument is that originally the administration was saying that it is a crisis. They kind of have backed off of that now, because the American people said you want to know what a crisis is? The crisis is that my son is sick and I cannot afford to take him, I am taking care of him through the drug store. I am buying off the shelf, which I think is a greater problem. I hope it is a cold. That is a crisis.

A crisis is not saying, hey, listen you know something, I got to move this private account thing while we are in power so we can help make our buddies even more buddies to us. Because that is what I think the underlying issue here is. And so I just want to step in there, because you made an excellent point.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I just think that is it. Thanks for reiterating it. It is just what is the crisis? What do you at home want us to deal with, because we work for you. What do you want us to deal with here? And we are trying to bring up issues like China and how we are going to deal with that tremendous threat, and the administration brushes it off.

You know, we want to deal with health care and the amount of poverty, not necessarily for compassionate reasons, although some may feel that way. But because we need everyone playing. We are going on the field now with only half a team, and that is getting very dangerous.

So as we wrap it up, I want to share again, send us an e-mail, 30somethingdems@mail.house.gov. Do I have time to read?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Go ahead and read the e-mail you have.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I want to read the e-mail.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Give the e-mail address.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I just gave it. 30somethingdemocrats@mail.

house.gov. Send us an e-mail. I want to read one, we only have time to read one here, from Mark Sanchez from Las Cruces, New Mexico. We are making it out West, somewhat of a political junkie, 25 year old active duty service member stationed out there.

And last week he saw us talking about Social Security, very hot topic. He considers himself very informed, and it bothers him to a great degree that those in my age group do not care about what the President and Congress are doing.

I personally feel that the President's plan for Social Security is not one with the people in mind, but rather one with his friends on Wall Street in mind. I may be young, but I am not blind to record deficits that are causing this country to go deeper and deeper into debt.

I believe the President's plan is wrong for America. I believe this is an

issue that can be addressed and thought over as time goes on while more important matters that are hurting this country are addressed. He said very similar things to what we were saying, issues such as health care, immigration and energy are problems that face Americans now, not 30 years down the road.

I am happy to see that you are willing to stand up for the people rather than special interest groups that have too much control in Congress these days. Please keep up your hard work because it is needed.

People like you keep his personal hopes alive for one day standing on the floor of the House of Representatives and debating issues and problems that face our country. So we have an aspiring Member of Congress here, Mark Sanchez. So thank you, Mark, for sending that in.

Again, 30somethingdems@mail.house.gov. You also go to the site I gave you earlier to check out the deficit clock too.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I want to thank the gentleman from Ohio. And to our e-mailer, we just want to say that all Democrats throughout this Congress will be calling into radio stations, be it country, rap, rock and roll, what have you, during drive time in the morning to talk about the importance of Social Security and young people.

Mr. Speaker, it is always an honor to come to the floor and we thank not only the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), the Democratic leader, but the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) the Democratic whip, for allowing us to have this hour week after week. This is a strong part of our democracy, and we really appreciate representing the 30-somethings and above and under, that age, to give them a voice here on the floor.

OVERVIEW OF THE WAR ON ILLEGAL NARCOTICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, tonight I am going to give an overview of the war on illegal narcotics in the United States.

I chair the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice Drug Policy and Human Services in the Government Reform Committee, which when the Republicans took over Congress in 1994, was reorganized by then Chairman Bill Zeliff followed by the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman HASTERT) followed by the gentleman from Florida (Chairman MICA), and now myself, to be a committee where we could do an overview of all of the different parts of the war on illegal drugs.

The challenge we have in narcotics is that this battle goes across many dif-

ferent agencies, and so it gets divided up somewhere in the neighborhood of 23 to 25 subcommittees in the House, a similar amount in the Senate, and nobody had been looking at it comprehensively.

So it wound up over in this committee. The authorizing of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, commonly known as the Drug Czar's office, is not only overseen now by this subcommittee, but actually is now authorized as primary authorizer in this subcommittee as well, which has led to the national ad campaign being added to that, the Community Antidrug Coalition, the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas, and increasingly some of the other bills are being assigned to this committee because we can look at it holistically, and then it also gets sometimes joint referrals to other committees as we are working through similarly on the homeland security bill, as people have been watching through this.

There is a couple of different points that I am going to cover tonight. One is kind of basically how we approach illegal drugs and how we are tackling this as a Congress, as a Presidency, and how this has evolved.

Secondly, looking at some of the successes, then focusing some on the major challenges we have ranging from the meth challenge to the border challenge, which has been getting a lot of news, to Afghanistan, to the abuse of legal drugs like steroids. We have been having hearings in our full committee in Government Reform.

Then some specific comments in detail on the President's which we have many concerns about, particularly his effort to, in effect, change many of the effective local programs, and nationalize them in Washington, and potentially gut the drug war of the United States.

And I am hoping Members of Congress and their staffs are watching tonight, because this is a direct-on challenge that could, in fact, undermine everything we have been doing.

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It needs a resounding defeat in this appropriations process so we do not have to fight this every year. A decisive win this year and a turning around and saying we are not abandoning State and local law enforcement and nationalizing everything in Washington is extremely critical in our drug war.

Let me first start out with kind of a philosophy because often when we come to the floor of Congress, you hear bits and pieces about what we are doing in the drug war, but you do not see a holistic picture with this.

So if you look at this as a start, the first role is not to have people use illegal narcotics. So we will start with safe and drug-free schools, trying to get to our schoolkids. We have community anti-drug coalitions to pull together communities in the United States to do these efforts.

We have the national ad campaign, that you see the ads focused on marijuana; and then in conjunction with the direct national ad campaign, the in-kind contributions that work through a multiplicity of organizations, but particularly the Drug-Free America coalition that has used the best advertising agencies in the United States to develop ads, which those of us who all too well remember, this is your brain, this is your brain on drugs, looking at the fried egg.

But the Partnership for a Drug-Free America has come up with many different creative ads that supplement the national ad campaign. It is a massive effort to try to battle everything from the jokes on the Tonight Show about our use of marijuana, to movies, to MTV, to all that type of stuff to make sure that we have a consistent national message out there.

Then we have drug testing, because one of the best ways to do prevention is to drug test people. I have a company in my district that they were told they had a problem. They drug tested their company and find out a third of the people were high on the spot of cocaine, meth, and this high-grade marijuana. Now, they immediately fired them, that they were in clear violation of a company policy, but one-third of their employees. Another similar thing in another county they did, and I think it was closer to 25 percent, but it is extraordinary.

Remember, these are not hair follicle tests. These are urine tests, which means it has to be fairly recent. A hair follicle test, you may be able to find drug use 30 days previous. Urine test means you are basically high on the job, running this equipment and doing this kind of stuff. So drug testing, if you know you are going to lose your job if you are drug tested, that is one of the best prevention programs; but those are some of the highlights of the prevention strategy, the national ad campaign, Partnership for a Drug-Free America, the community coalition, drug-free schools and drug testing.

Then you go, okay, if this stuff's too cheap or too pure, basically it overwhelms the prevention policy. So what do we do? First, we try to get this stuff, get the illegal narcotics at its source.

So let us take cocaine and heroin in Colombia. First, you try to eradicate it. You go there, spray the stuff, hit it multiple times a year. If you fail and some gets out, which it always does, then you try to interdict it in the source country and get it before it hits the shores of the Caribbean or the eastern Pacific. Once it gets in the water, now we are dealing rather than in an area maybe the size of Texas, we are dealing in an area that is huge, the Caribbean Sea and the eastern Pacific. So it is much harder to get it.

If it gets to our border, in our land border, in Mexico, the Gulf of Mexico, Florida, comes up farther into California or up into New York City or