

would take nearly 5 days of wading in the shark-infested Pacific Ocean for the survivors to be rescued.

During the closing weeks of World War II, Captain Charles McVay, III, Dr. Haynes, and the rest of the crew of the USS *Indianapolis* were charged, albeit unknowingly, with the daunting task of transporting key components of the atomic bomb from San Francisco Bay to the island of Tinian.

□ 2030

After completing their mission and dropping off their cargo, the Indy set sail for the Philippines where she was to meet up with the rest of the Pacific Fleet to prepare for what everyone believed was going to be an invasion of mainland Japan. Very few people knew about the top secret weapon that could potentially end the war, including Captain McVay.

Just 3 days into their voyage to the Philippines, a Japanese submarine spotted the Indy just after midnight. The submarine then fired six torpedoes at her, two of which struck the battleship and would prove her undoing. Amid the chaos, Dr. Haynes tried to do everything he could to help the survivors stay alive to make it off the ship. As the Indy sank, he treated as many of the ship's crew as he could with morphine and wrapped them with bandages. Realizing he was running out of time, he began fastening life vests around the men, directing them off the ship into the dark, unknowing water below. Simultaneously, a radio distress signal from the Indy was received on the island of Leyte. Although it was reported, no action was taken to save the crew.

It took only 12 minutes for the USS *Indianapolis* to sink into the Pacific Ocean. About 300 men died in the attack, leaving 900 more to fend for their lives in the deadly water. In the midst of the pandemonium, the crew of the Indy was scattered throughout the ocean. Some groups were lucky enough to have a lifeboat and some supplies. Others were fortunate enough to have life vests. However, some had nothing to help keep them alive.

Dr. Haynes found himself in charge of the largest group of survivors. Although they did not have a lifeboat, the group, called the "swimmers" by Dr. Haynes, was fortunate enough to have life vests and belts. Dr. Haynes and Father Conway, the ship's chaplain, would swim around to the crew to treat the sick and injured and to round up the lone men floating adrift.

Days would go by, and Dr. Haynes would watch helplessly as more of the young crew passed away from disease, dehydration, and shark attacks. He did what he could to ease their pain and suffering. He fought off attacks when the men went mad from hallucination. He gave those men hope and a reason to live when all seemed lost. However, with no food, water, or medical supplies, Dr. Haynes was no longer a physician but more of a coroner. After Fa-

ther Conway died, Dr. Haynes would give the dead their last rights by reciting the Lord's Prayer. He knew he had to stay alive. His boys depended upon him.

Finally, on August 3, 1945, after 4½ days in the deadly ocean, the survivors would be rescued. In the end, only 317 of the 1,196 crew survived the catastrophe. Those who did survive would go through weeks of intense therapy for their injuries. It would take Dr. Haynes a month of convalescence before he could walk again. Additionally, he suffered third-degree burns on his face and hands from the explosions aboard the Indy.

Because of the bravery of the crew of the USS *Indianapolis* in transporting the atomic bomb across the ocean, they helped end World War II and subsequently saved countless American lives. We will forever be grateful to those men for their contributions to freedom. Moreover, we should acknowledge the individual heroism of men like Dr. Lewis Haynes who helped save lives by keeping hope.

Mr. Speaker, although Dr. Haynes' life ended on March 11, 2001, when he died at his home in Florida, his legacy will live forever. May we never forget the sacrifices made by our greatest generation and all of the members past and present of our Armed Forces. It is because of their selflessness that we enjoy the freedom we have today.

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

(Mr. EMANUEL of Illinois 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 Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. OSBORNE of Nebraska 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 Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

#### METAMORPHOSIS

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

Mr. GOODE. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to read a poem by Molly Brown. Molly is a 13-year-old who suffers from cerebral palsy, and she is the

daughter of a college professor at Sweet Briar and his wife. She read this poem at an Adaptive Ski event for injured soldiers from Iraq and Afghanistan that was held at Wintergreen in Nelson County in my district.

Commander William L. Shade of Nelson County American Legion Post 17 sent me this poem, and I want to share it with the United States House of Representatives.

The poem is entitled "Metamorphosis."

For every soldier who lost something in Iraq:  
 What do I say to those  
 Who have looked time's end in the eye  
 And faced it, heads raised,  
 With their own eyes open  
 Not afraid to fear?  
 What comfort can I offer those  
 Who lost the life they knew,  
 And must begin again  
 With eyes that see  
 A world transformed?  
 How do I greet the boy  
 Who donned an Army jacket  
 And stepped on a bus,  
 Ending his childhood  
 Before his time?  
 I speak slowly,  
 Knowing this is all I can say;  
 I hope that on the mountain,  
 As you take your first fall  
 And powder, cool as moonlight, hits your  
 cheek  
 That you can regain  
 If only for a moment  
 All that you have lost  
 And see before yourselves  
 A future uninhibited and bright.

By Molly Brown.

#### UNITED AIRLINES PENSION COLLAPSE

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

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, last night the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) and I myself read into the RECORD statements that we have received from the employees and the retirees of United Airlines who were worried to death about the fact that their pensions are going to be severely cut as a result of United's decision to terminate their employee pension plans as part of its bankruptcy proceedings.

Tonight, we would like to again read many of the e-mails that we have received from these retirees and these employees outlining what the real human toll is of the actions of United Airlines and the inactions of this Congress to deal with this growing crisis in the American pension plans for workers.

As the Members will later hear, Mr. Speaker, some of these 2,000 people who responded to the first ever congressional E-hearing by my Democratic colleagues on the Committee on Education and the Workforce, through their ingenuity, we were able to extend an opportunity to these individuals to

be heard because there was no forum in this Congress for them to be heard. There was no forum that said that the average people who are being impacted by this policy will be heard. So we came up with the idea of having a congressional on-line E-hearing where the retirees and the employees of United Airlines could express directly to the Congress the concerns that these changes have made to them. I think these average Americans are beginning to notice and beginning to articulate the fact that this Congress has not dealt with these concerns, with the concerns that affect their daily lives.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to read an e-mail from Fred P. Euler from Santa Barbara, California. He writes to us in the e-mail: "As a retired United Airlines pilot, I need your help to stop United Airlines from dumping our pension plan in the lap of the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation and possibly the taxpayers. The Retiree Pilot Pension Plan is adequately funded and should be paid by United Airlines, not the PBGC. The amount that the PBGC will pay out will have a devastating impact on thousands of retired pilots who devoted their careers to United Airlines and are now shocked, saddened and angry about the callous disregard displayed by United Airlines and the PBGC if it succeeds in seizing our pension plan. I am 69 years old with 32 years of service. It is estimated that my monthly loss will be about \$2,000, which is over 30 percent of my pension."

Jeanne Miller of Murrieta, California, writes: "I am writing this in the hope it might save the termination of United Airlines pension plans . . . I worked as a dedicated flight attendant for over 33 years. I am a single mom with one child who has graduated from college, we are both still paying tuition, and a son who is in his first year of college. I retired reluctantly in June, 2003. United offered a deal to those flight attendants willing to retire early that was hard to resist: good medical benefits and a pension that was enough to support me and my son . . . Now they are threatening to take all of that away." Under the previous plan, she "would have been able to be the caregiver for both of my parents, who are disabled and unable to live by themselves without care.

"If United turns over our pension to the PBGC, it will create a tremendous hardship."

John Givens of Redondo Beach, California: "I was a 36½-year employee who was forced into retirement when United closed my reservation office in Long Beach, California. My retirement was good enough that my wife, who is disabled, and I thought we could make it. We have raised seven children, two who are still in college. They work part time but will have to drop out because I will no longer be able to help them. I will lose approximately 55 percent of my pension due to the rules."

Mr. Speaker, these are e-mails from United retirees and United employees

who now see their economic future deeply clouded, deeply threatened by these actions by United. They see the fact that they worked hard for 30 years, for 33 years, for 36 years. There is no way now that they have retired where they can go and accumulate the necessary resources to have the retirement that they carefully planned for by their hard work on behalf of United Airlines. These are the people who are crying out for help before their retirement nest eggs are destroyed by the United Airlines.

The gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) and I have introduced legislation to put a 6-month moratorium to see whether or not the pilots, the machinists, and the others can negotiate with United to try to protect these individuals' retirement.

Mr. Speaker, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) joined me last night, and I yield to her tonight for her comments and for the letters that she has received through this e-mail hearing.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) for yielding to me.

I want to express my appreciation for all that he has done to draw attention to the plight of United employees and how what has been happening with them really reflects the larger looming pension crisis in our country. He has repeatedly called on Congress to protect defined benefit plans and to ensure that the rank and file workers have the same retirement security that executives with golden parachutes do. As he frequently says, "What is good for the captain is good for the sailor." I thank him for his leadership and his fight for workers, and I really appreciate working with him on this important issue.

As he knows, United Airlines, like so many other corporations, has exploited loopholes in the law to disguise the true financial standing of its pension funds. The company knowingly underfunded its pensions and hid the truth from its workers about their retirement security, all quite legally. The nearly \$10 billion shortfall at United was only revealed when the company asked the bankruptcy court to terminate its pension plans and now the employees are the ones that are going to have to pay the price. These dedicated employees have had the rug swept out from under them, and their retirement security is in serious question through no fault of their own.

United employees have tried to be responsible. They have tried to plan ahead. When they signed up for their jobs they believed they were making informed financial decisions for today and for their retirement. United offered luring packages of benefits, included defined benefit pensions, meaning employees were guaranteed a set figure for their retirement when their years of work for United Airlines were done, years down the road.

Now, because United is using the bankruptcy court to back out of its

pension agreements, United employees and retirees are being tossed into retirement without a parachute. Tens of thousands of the flight attendants and machinists that are affected are in Illinois, 10,000 of them. It seems now that the only ones who are making honestly informed decisions about what they were getting into were the executives like Chairman Glenn Tilton, who squirreled away his \$4.5 million retirement fund in a trust that cannot be touched during bankruptcy proceedings. He made sure to protect his retirement package because he, like his employees, knows exactly how important planning ahead is.

I would like to share a few stories from United employees in Illinois who, because they were being fiscally responsible, know exactly how losing their pensions will affect them. These are letters that came through the E-hearing, the on-line hearing that the gentleman and his committee held.

□ 2045

This is the story of Michael Moore from Crystal Lake, Illinois. It is the other Michael Moore. He writes: "I hope you have some time to hear from a small voice and on a quiet street in Illinois. I am a 54-year-old maintenance mechanic for United Airlines. Having 25 years for the company in today's world is a trick in itself. My wife and I have raised our four children and they are out building a life of their own. You work, you plan and you save for this point in your life, only to have lost it all. I have only 4 months until I was planning to retire and now I can't. I have lost \$60,000 in the United Airlines employee stock option plan back in 2001, gave up a total 23 percent wages in the last few years, sold my home and now will lose my pension and health care. What is next?"

"There has to be a better way. We can't just allow large corporations to just terminate pension plans. The pension plan is our deferred wages traded from our current wage to provide a retirement in the future, a legal contract. Now it is not worth the paper it was written on.

"I feel I am a perfect example of how Mr. Bush's Social Security plan will fail. As the employees of United continue to give and give and give, our top management make more and more. Something isn't right."

If I could go on, I have a couple more. This is what Paula Carlson from Oak Lawn, Illinois, had to say: "I have been a flight attendant for almost 20 years for United Airlines, and if my pension is terminated I will be paid as if I terminated my employment at 47, even if I continue to work and retire from United Airlines when I am 62. My retirement plans were for the full pension I was promised, a 401(k) and Social Security. Now I will have to live off of \$400 monthly approximately from my pension, instead of \$2,800 monthly.

"I can hardly contribute to my 401(k) due to pay cuts at United. I will be at

poverty level and may have to be a burden on my son, who is only 16, but hopes will make a decent enough living to help me out.

"We have been deceived our whole lives about hard work paying off. The only ones paid off are the CEO and the board of directors. They come in with their guaranteed payoff and the company they have been hired to build or maintain can collapse right from under them, while the workers who built the companies lose everything and become a burden on their children and our society. What has happened to our country?"

Let me read one more. This is a good one. The following is Joseph Gillick's story. He is a flight attendant based out of Chicago, lives in Espyville, Pennsylvania:

"If you have traveled frequently on United Airlines during the last 13 years, chances are you have become familiar with my voice and face. I have worked as a flight attendant for United Airlines for 29-plus years. My name is Joseph Gillick, I am based in Chicago Illinois, and I am the safety video spokesperson seen on United flights worldwide.

"I submit United senior executive's bankruptcy strategy under the leadership of CEO Glenn Tilton is an affront to basic human values, financially wrong and unquestionably unpatriotic.

"If senior executives are successful in dumping pension obligations, forcing the PBGC to take responsibility, I will immediately lose 50 percent of my meager \$1,100-a-month pension benefit. I am presently the primary caretaker of my 89-year-old mother. With ever-increasing health care and home care expense, my mother and myself are just two out of countless thousands of citizens who will be unquestionably harmed and placed in dire financial circumstances.

"No question United is operating under severe financial circumstances. Difficult decisions must be made. Corporate change must occur. Yet at the end of the day, will we be able to say all possible solutions were explored before allowing United executives to dump employee pension responsibilities?"

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I think the gentlewoman has raised a number of people who wrote her from Illinois, the retirees and employees of United raised this point, that it was actually the President that said what is good for the crew is good for the captain.

What we see here clearly is what so many of these employees recognize, and what we have watched now is company after company that terminates these employee pension plans, that go into bankruptcy, at the end of the day the company goes on, less these liabilities, and the very people who administered the company into the bankruptcy, their pensions in many cases were guaranteed, they were moved out-

side of bankruptcy, they were put into trusts, or as the company is reorganized, they then go back to issuing stock options for themselves, issuing bonuses, as if nothing happened.

Yet what we see here is tens of thousands of United employees who are left in the dust bin. Many of these people cannot go back to work. They cannot go back and accumulate a retirement nest egg again, and I think it is something we see run through all of our letters. I want to thank the gentlewoman for raising that point.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield further, let me say one thing about that. It is not as if they are saying we want things to be exactly as we were promised when we came in. These employees have given up about \$3 billion in benefits already.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Reclaiming my time, time and again these employees have given back on retirement, have given back on wages, have given back on hours to keep this airline flying; and yet at the end of the day, the executives walk out to the new company and the employees are stuck without their retirement, without their health care benefit.

I now recognize my colleague, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY), who was part of our e-hearing, the first-ever Congress e-hearing to provide this kind of access to ordinary Americans who are suffering the disaster, the personal disaster of the larger disaster of the United Airlines decision to go into bankruptcy and get rid of these pensions and health care plans.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the ranking member, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), and thank the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) as well for your leadership on this issue, and for convening this e-hearing and also taking this time on the floor tonight.

I think it is imperative to read as many of these e-mails as possible into the RECORD and express the voice of so many people that earned their pensions, that worked their long work lives and took as a form of deferred compensation the rights to these pension benefits. They sacrificed pay raises and sacrificed other benefits in exchange for what they thought was a promise from the company that they were going to get this pension when they retired.

One UAL person wrote in and said, "I joined UAL with stars in my eyes believing the promise of opportunity, a secure benefit package and the enthusiasm of being part of something great."

Well, it really has not been something great for them. As the gentleman mentioned, in every way the employees tried to work it out with the company. I am so used, as the gentleman is, from hearing executives tell us, oh, the employees will not cooperate, the employees and their high costs are driving this company down.

Well, it was the employees at UAL that actually went into an ESOP program, an employee stock option program, that turned out to be near worthless for them in the long run. Some lost hundreds of thousands of dollars trying to help the company out. They underwent cuts in pay, they forewent benefits, and all of this to find the company surreptitiously sneaks into bankruptcy for 2½ years and then slides their benefits into bankruptcy and they end up going into the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation and getting about 30 to 40 percent of the benefits, if they are lucky.

These letters, these e-mails, are written about feelings of betrayal, absolute feelings of betrayal. They say it is a sign of what they think is happening to the moral fiber of this country. They wonder on a philosophical level how this is going to impact the values that they have been brought up with and they have been instilling in their children.

Jacob Acker said not too long ago that in 1938 FDR talked about the last great unconquered frontier of America was the frontier of uncertainty and insecurity. And then as a country we set out to do something about it. We worked with corporations, with employee groups, we worked with private groups and our government and we put in Social Security, we put in pensions, we put in health care benefits, the minimum wage, the GI Bill. We put in structures and security so people in this country would no longer feel that they were confronting that frontier of insecurity and uncertainty.

But here we are in 2005, we find out executives and management of a company can turn it around and take their promises and turn them into dust and take their employees and put them into sheer desperation, so that again in 2005 we are again facing a frontier of uncertainty and insecurity. And it is incumbent on this Congress to finally act.

I say to the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), as ranking member of this Committee on Education and Workforce, and the members on the minority side who have been banging away for some time now saying this is an impending problem that has to be addressed, where is Congress on this matter? Where is the White House on this matter? They are dealing with issues the American public does not even care about. You look at what has happened so far this year on the agenda of this Congress and the White House. It is not about jobs, it is not about health care, it is not about education for people's children, and it is not about pension protection and retirement.

The closest the President comes is trying to privatize Social Security, which would put these people in further jeopardy. And that is what I hear often from the people at United. Boy, if they ever realized about the guaranteed benefit of Social Security being

important, they now realize it, because what they thought was a benefit due them from their employment has gone out the window.

As I said, these stories are touching. But they are more than touching; they are tragic. For many of the people here, it is too late to start over. I think in one of the letters that either the gentleman or the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) read, they talked about dedicating their life to the company for a promise and now being faced with decisions that they never thought they would have to face and making choices they never thought they would have to make.

What about their health care? Are they going to be able to afford it for themselves, for their loved ones, particularly for their children? There are 120,000 employees that face these deep benefit cuts. It is going to make a serious impact, and many of them are concerned for themselves, but, even more so, for what happens if other companies follow in the footsteps of United.

What happens if this Congress under Republican leadership continues to fail to act to shore up these defined benefit pensions, to shore up the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation system so that it takes care of people, to make sure that every corporation does not decide to slide into bankruptcy and dump its responsibilities onto the PBGC and to hurt their employees and leave them no recourse. We need to act.

Let me read one letter, if I can, from my district, Kevin P. Creighan and Cathy J. Hampton from Lynn, Massachusetts. They e-mailed in: "We know that approximately 120,000 current and former employees will suffer if United Airlines is allowed to hand its pensions over to the PBGC. I will address the concerns of two of those current employees, my wife Cathy and myself, as examples of the upcoming devastation.

"Cathy has been with United for 27 years, and I have been there for 29, a combined 56 years of working hard, earning a living, and all along expecting a pension in 7 years' time when we planned to retire. At our retirement, between us we expected to have 70 years of loyal service to our employer, single employer; and we each expected to receive monthly pension checks of about \$2,500 per month.

"If United is allowed to break its promise to pay our pensions, our actuaries tell us we would each probably receive less than \$1,000 per month. We are already told that we could work an additional 15 years and we might get closer to our current pension, but that is predicated upon a very strong stock market and successful investments. Work 15 more years, and only to get closer to something else.

"Our retirement income would drop by 60 percent unless we choose to work beyond 70 years of age. This is not the American way. We thank you for considering how dreadful this situation is, not only for the two of us, but for our 120,000 colleagues who have worked every bit as hard."

We have letter after letter from Massachusetts residents and people in my district that show, exactly as the gentleman's have, this is a tragic failure of Congress to respond and a tragic action by a corporation that should know better and should have acted differently.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman. Again, he has raised an important point. These employees of United Airlines, these employees for the last several years have worked with this company to give back part of their retirement, give back part of their health care, give back part of their wages, give back part of their hours, all the rest of it. They were struggling to stay in the middle class. These are good, middle-class jobs. They were struggling to stay in those jobs, to stay in the middle class with the assurance of that retirement.

Very often people think, well, the retirement is something you get at the end of your employment. The fact of the matter is, every hour of pay you have negotiated, you give something for retirement. You earn it on an hourly basis. Your employer decides how much they want to pay you and they figure in your benefits and all of the rest of it. It is a package.

Now, of course, here at the end, people after 30, 40 years, finding out that they have lost a huge percentage of their retirement and have no ability to replace it.

Mr. TIERNEY. If the gentleman will yield further, one of the things not true is most of these executives have not worked anywhere near the number of years that these employees have worked for that company. Many of them come on as directors of the board or in high-level positions for a much shorter period of time, qualify for some pretty extravagant pension rights of their own, solidify them by putting them in a trust that cannot be touched in a bankruptcy proceeding, and go out merrily into the sunset having destroyed a company, or at least their employees' chances to have a decent, dignified retirement.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, over the last several years, the gentleman is quite correct, we have seen CEOs and other corporate officers who are retiring, and they have worked for the company for 3 years and they are given a retirement package as if they worked at that company for 23 years, if they worked at that company for 15 years. So they just make up the retirement package for the CEOs and they go on their way.

The CEOs that ran United into the ground here, that have destroyed this company, they get severance packages, they get golden parachutes, they go on their way. The employees who are left struggling trying to rebuild this airline to try to keep it competitive, they are the ones that take the slicing and the dicing of the loss of the pensions, the loss of the health care, the loss of the retirement.

Mr. TIERNEY. If the gentleman will yield further, compare that to John Lagadinos from Billerica, Massachusetts. He is a retired aircraft mechanic with 42 years of service with United Airlines, 35 years were spent working the nightshift, afternoons, midnights, working most weekends, Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, with, as he says, no social life to speak of.

He says, "We also worked in rain, sleet and cold, heat and cold. The executives didn't. So cold in the winter our hands would be cracked and bleeding from working on the aircraft outside.

"Contractually our monthly medical insurance for my wife and I was \$22 per month pre-65 years of age and \$24 per month post-65.

□ 2100

But, recently, that has been increased to \$214 per month, with a decrease in coverage and an increase in out-of-pocket cost. So it is not bad enough that their pension rights are being shaved down to less than 15 percent but that they are heaped on with additional medical expenses, another promise that was made to them that is not being kept by corporations, as more and more companies are starting to default on their retirement health benefits as well. So it is a double whammy.

The prescription drug costs have increased from the \$5 generic, \$10 name brand to \$19 generic, \$51 name brand. His wife and he use four name brand drugs costing \$204, that used to cost them \$40.

Then he talks about what the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) and the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) talked about earlier. These same employees went into an employee stock option plan at the request of the company to try to save the company. They were not allowed to contribute to the 401(k) that they paid on their own. The company never contributed to the 401(k). In lieu of wages, they were given useless stocks and ended up selling on the employees for about a dollar a share. For this individual, it was costing about \$160,000, which he lost.

He says, with all of these losses and losing a portion of our pension, too, I do not know how we will make it. They do not want this to become a precedent for other companies. Thank you for your concern and action.

Concern is something that we have here. Action is what this Congress needs to do and which it has not been doing.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman very much for participating in this.

I would like, before I recognize the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS), to read one last letter that we have here tonight, and I will read others in the coming days, from Ann Clegg of San Francisco, California:

"I retired as a flight attendant from United Airlines in 2002 after 37 years of

service. I was promised a pension and quit at age 58 after carefully considering the money I would live on, and my pension was a big part of that. Now, with the threat of the reduction of my pension, obviously, my standard of living will be greatly reduced. I ask you, if there is anything good, right, and honest in this country, why is this happening? I worked and believed a promise that should be upheld by my company and the government. I would not have retired early had I known that United Airlines would be allowed to renege on its promise. This is wrong and shameful. Please help."

The point is, again, these people upheld their end of the promise. The promise was between the employees and the company, the handshake was between the employees and the company, and that is why these people are so devastated when the company made the decision to go into bankruptcy and to discharge these pension obligations and their health care.

I know the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) and I knew the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) and I know the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY) have read these letters.

So very often, these very same families that are losing their retirement income have serious health problems within their families, either their children, their spouse, their parents, who they are taking care of. Their own retirement benefits and their health care benefits for their family were very important to them, and now they are saddled with increasing health care costs, with a diminished health care plan, if any at all, and, obviously, a greatly diminished pension. So these people are really suffering a double hit by the actions of United.

We have written to our committee, the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for several years now, asking them to have hearings, asking them to look at this problem, asking them to look into the PBGC. Only today, as the Senate held its hearings, did people start talking about the loopholes.

We have known about those loopholes on the committee for years, to bring to everyone's attention how the pension plan was gamed, how the real figures are not disclosed to the employees, not disclosed to the investors, not disclosed to the public, the conditions of these pension plans. Only when it is too late are those disclosures made as the company enters into bankruptcy and there is very little the employees can do about that.

It is absolutely a scandal what has taken place here and the inaction of this Congress. Only now do we start to see them take action. But no inquiry before, no discussion of the problem, and even as we start to take this action we will not have the full information before us about the extent of this problem, and not just United Airlines but in major corporations all across the country.

I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. TIERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I do not have to remind the gentleman from California about his efforts to have the committee go to the administration and get that information about where does the rest of the employment situation lie, where are the rest of these pensions in terms of their viability. The fact of the matter is we have been unable to get that information until very recently. We got some of it.

But what is the problem with disclosing that to the American public? What is the problem with the Congress knowing the full extent and the public knowing the full extent, how many companies are in this precarious situation? That, if anything, would force Congress hopefully to get up and act.

Something that we have known, something that the gentleman has led the way in writing to the committee, speaking to the committee and the administration on this issue and now trying to get the information that will compel them to act on it. Because it is devastating to learn just how many companies are in a situation that are near default or problematic.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I just recently wrote to the chairman of the committee and, after reviewing that information that was given to us by the PBGC, I asked him, I think it is very important that the committee go ahead and have a vote and make this information public. Because, obviously, what we have seen is there is a huge disparity between what the public has been told of the pension problems of these companies and what the PBGC has been told in secret, out of the public eye, not for disclosure, what the real situation of these pension plans are.

So that we have millions of Americans who believe the conditions of their company's pension plan is one thing, and the company knows it is another. In many cases, as we wrote to the chairman and said, the difference is hundreds of millions of dollars and, in some cases, billions of dollars in terms of those liabilities. I think that those employees, when they see how this can happen with the United case, those employees are entitled to that information.

Interestingly enough, the President of the United States asked 4 years ago that this information be made public, but the companies are lobbying hard so it will not be made public, and, so far, the committee has not responded to our letter. But certainly before we begin writing a new pension bill we ought to have this information laid out on the public record so people can comment on it to see whether or not the bill that we are considering, the ideas that the President has will make this worse or make it better. I thank the gentleman for raising that point.

I would like at this time to recognize another member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, a mem-

ber of long standing of the Committee on Education and the Workforce who, in every session of this Congress, has taken on the responsibilities of this committee to look at these issues that confront working families in the workplace, in their health care, in their daily lives in the workplaces of America, and that is the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS).

Mr. Speaker, I am going to yield the balance of our time to the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) for the purposes of this discussion and to read the communications from individuals from New York.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for joining us tonight.

#### HUMAN SUFFERING AS A RESULT OF CORPORATE THEFT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MACK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) is recognized for the remainder of the designee of the Minority Leader's time.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, may I ask how much time I have left?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Approximately 30 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking and congratulating my colleagues on the Committee on Education and the Workforce, the ranking member, the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER), the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY), and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY), I want to thank them for their invention of the congressional e-hearing. This is not a small thing. We now have a device, one more productive milestone for communication, that can allow us to reach out into the entire Nation, beyond the Beltway, beyond the partisan arguments of the Congress.

This is a very important new instrument for freedom of speech and for freedom of the minority party. We are, as Democrats, a minority party, and we are an oppressed minority party in that we are not given the right to call hearings or we are not allowed to recommend hearings and have the majority party follow through on those hearings. That was not the case when the Democrats were in the majority, but that is the way it has developed with the present Republican majority.

So we have a device now whereby any citizen can participate. They do not have to pay the fare to come to Washington, but you can participate in a hearing, and I think this is a device that we should look forward to using more often.

We should understand that in street language what my colleagues have been talking about is a legal swindling, legal theft. How can there be legal theft? Well, whatever the Congress approves is legal. They sometimes approve things that are immoral and illegal, really. They sometimes approve things that are devastating for people.