

It is too unfortunate that many minorities and women because of the inequities of the system, which we hope will be corrected, find themselves more dependent than the rest of the population. This is especially so when we do have a disparity between the life expectancies of men and women which means that for 3 or 4 years women sometimes have to go it alone and many sometimes their working spouses did not have pensions. And so it is abundantly clear that if you take a look at the women that sometimes have to totally survive with their families, Social Security gave them the base, gave them the independence, and gave them the will to move forward.

It is so hard for me who is so proud of having gone to school as a disabled veteran to talk about the G.I. Bill. What has been amazing is that even I had no idea how many people even in this body went to school under the Social Security Disability Act or under the benefits of Social Security. And it is something that you do not say, guess how I went to school, because it was unfortunate financial circumstances.

But now that they see that this program may be in jeopardy because just by changing the formula from a wage formula to a cost-of-living formula, Republicans and Democrats and impartial economists say that the benefits, and that is all of benefits, survivor, retirement, their disability, would be cut by at least 40 percent.

The President has attempted to polarize sometimes the young against the old by saying they are getting a bad deal, or the black males against the white males saying that we have a disparity. But one thing is clear: we cannot openly discuss this until the President fulfills his responsibility and at least brings to us what the heck he is talking about so we are not fighting against things that may never happen.

We know that Republicans are having a difficult time in defining how they would want to assist the President. But I am just saying until the day comes where minorities and women are really equal, this has been a cushion to provide some type of independence.

I close by saying that my beloved mother, who I lost several years ago, worked in a factory and received a small retirement pension check from the International Labor Garment Workers Union, but she also received her Social Security check.

□ 2015

And she would be there every month waiting for the mailman, who knew her, for her Social Security check. She felt so proud that she was independent; that she did not have to ask her children for anything.

Seeing that pride in her, I can see it in so many older women. And I hope that before the President makes this a crises, that he brings us a bill so we can work together on it.

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the unique history of the great State of Texas. Today, March 2, marks Texas Independence Day. On this day, 169 years ago, Texas declared its independence from Mexico and its dictator, Santa Anna, the 19th century Saddam Hussein.

In 1836, in the small farm village of Washington-on-the-Brazos, 54 Texians, as they called themselves in those days, gathered to do something bold and courageous: Sign the Texas Declaration of Independence and once and for all "declare that the people of Texas do now constitute a free, sovereign, and independent republic."

As these determined delegates met to declare independence, Santa Anna and 6,000 enemy troops were marching on an old beat-up Spanish mission that we now call the Alamo, where Texas defenders stood defiant, stood determined. They were led by a 27-year-old lawyer by the name of William Barrett Travis. The Alamo and its 186 Texans were all that stood between the invaders and the people of Texas. And behind the cold, dark, damp walls of that Alamo, Commander William Barrett Travis sent the following appeal to Texas requesting aide.

This appeal read in part: "To all the people of Texas and Americans in the world, I am besieged by a thousand or more of the enemy under Santa Anna. I have sustained a continual bombardment and cannon fire for over 24 hours and have not lost a man. The enemy has demanded surrender at its discretion, otherwise the fort will be put to the sword. I have answered that demand with a cannon shot, and the flag still waves proudly over the walls. I shall never surrender or retreat. I call upon you in the name of liberty, patriotism, and everything dear to our character to come to our aid with all dispatch. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself for as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his own honor and that of his country. Victory or death. William Barrett Travis, Commander of the Alamo."

After 13 days of glory at the Alamo, Commander Travis and his men sacrificed their lives on the altar of freedom. Those lives lost would not be in vain. Their determination paid off. And because heroes like William Barrett Travis, Davy Crockett, and Jim Bowie held out for so long, Santa Anna's forces took such great losses they became battered, demoralized, and diminished. As Travis said, "victory will cost them more dearly than defeat."

General Sam Houston, in turn, had the time he needed to devise a strategy to rally other Texas volunteers to ultimately defeat Santa Anna at the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836. The

war was over, and the Lone Star flag was visible all across the broad, bold, brazen plains of Texas.

The Alamo defenders were from every State in the United States and 13 foreign countries. They were black, brown, and white, ages 16 through 67, and they were all volunteers. They were mavericks, revolutionaries, farmers, shopkeepers, and freedom fighters. They came together to fight for something they believed in: Freedom.

Freedom has a cost. It always does. It always will. And as we pause to remember those who lost their lives so that Texas could be a free Nation, we cannot forget those Americans that are currently fighting in lands across the seas for the United States' continued freedom and liberty today.

Texas Independence Day is a day of pride and reflection in the Lone Star State. It is a day we remember to pay tribute to heroes like William Barrett Travis, Jim Bowie, Davy Crockett, Jim Bonham, Sam Houston, and the rest of those volunteers who fought the evil tyrant and terrorist Santa Anna. It was an effort to make Texas free, and that effort was successful.

On this Texas Independence Day, let us not forget those brave men and women in our military that are fighting to preserve and uphold our freedom from a new world threat of terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Congress and the country will join me in celebrating this Texas Independence Day. In Colonel Travis' final letter and appeal for aid, he signed off with three words that I leave with you now: "God and Texas." "God and Texas." "God and Texas." And the rest, as they say, is Texas history.

PRESIDENT BUSH'S SOCIAL SECURITY PRIVATIZATION PROPOSAL

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. Mr. Speaker, this Friday, President Bush plans to take his traveling White House to New Jersey in the hope of convincing New Jersey workers to support his Social Security privatization proposal. For 6 weeks, the President has been working to build support for his plan, but it has fallen flat with the American people and it will fall flat also in New Jersey.

Mr. Speaker, the American people simply do not believe the President wants to strengthen Social Security. President Bush keeps on talking about a crisis, but even he has admitted his own privatization plan does nothing to fix the problem Social Security faces 40 years from now.

The problem is that private accounts eliminate the guaranteed benefits of Social Security and leave benefits to the vagaries of the stock market. Since the money is taken out of the Social Security trust fund to pay for private accounts, the shortfall results in benefit cuts to Social Security recipients,

and the Federal Government has to borrow more money and go further in debt to try to make up for the shortfall.

Last week, I held two Social Security town hall forums in different parts of the State. First, I talked with senior citizens in Smithville, just outside of Atlantic City, and next I visited with more than 70 college students in Brookdale, at Brookdale Community College in Monmouth County. Here too the forum was open to all members of the college's political science and history club. I would assume some of the participants were Republicans, but that does not really matter.

The bottom line is that as Members of Congress, Senators, and senior organizations hold forums around the country and explain the President's privatization plan, there is more and more opposition to it. While the President still seems to think his privatization plan is catching on, Congressional Republicans brave enough to have town hall forums heard an earful from supporters of the current Social Security System.

Mr. Speaker, let me just give some examples. From the February 23 edition of the Philadelphia Inquirer: "At two stops, morning at Drexel University; afternoon at Widener University, the Pennsylvania Republican Senator SANTORUM encountered skepticism and hostility as he voiced his support for the White House plan to allow privatization of personal accounts using payroll taxes. He was heckled by protesters, called a liar, and told that his views were unconscionable. Those sentiments ranged across the spectrum."

That is from the Philadelphia Inquirer. From the February 22 Washington Post: "At every stop, Representative PAUL RYAN faced skeptics. Nancy McDonald, 66, who sells securities and insurance, complained in Darien that health care for the uninsured needs to be addressed before Social Security. 'Slow down! Slow down!' She scolded the lawmaker at one point."

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I take a quote from the February 22 Savannah Morning News. "At Armstrong Atlantic State University, the subject of Social Security caused a crowd of 200 to become rowdy. Questions were shouted out. The congressman," Congressman KINGSTON, "was interrupted. And one of Congressman KINGSTON's assistants was booed when she announced an end to the hour-long discussion."

These are just examples. In meeting after meeting Republicans got a chilly reception to the President's Social Security plan. Maybe that is why we heard today that Senate majority leader BILL FRIST thinks the Senate may not be able to take up the President's Social Security privatization plan until next year.

Mr. Speaker, many of my constituents are concerned about the President's plan. Unfortunately, they will not have the opportunity to voice

those concerns to the President this Friday morning in Westfield, New Jersey. But we are going to be heard anyway. I have chartered a bus, and I am taking several dozen of my constituents to join people from all over New Jersey at a rally in support of truly strengthening Social Security.

We are going to go with the bus to Westfield, New Jersey, where the President is going to be, and maybe the President will send some of his staffers over so they can really hear from us how their plan is being received outside the White House. It is not being received well, because Americans are finally waking up to the fact that the President's privatization plan is bad for them, bad for Social Security, and bad for America.

TRIBUTE TO MS. CLARA JENKINS

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

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of an extraordinary member of my community, Clara Jenkins. In the 1950s, Clara helped advance the Civil Rights movement in Georgia by breaking down color barriers at a local hospital.

On August 20, 1951, Clara was hired as the first black nurse at Kennestone Hospital in Cobb County. Now, 1951 was not an easy time to be a black nurse among all-white colleagues. The Brown v. Board of Education ruling, that mandated separate but equal was inherently unequal, was still 3 years away. In 1951, Kennestone Hospital was segregated by floor and ward. Black patients and white patients received their care separately and in unequal surroundings.

But Clara did not let segregation deter her goal of providing care for the sick and the needy. Through her determination and talent, she proved to her colleagues that skill, not skin color, was what mattered most.

Despite having earned a nursing degree right here in Washington, D.C., Clara was not initially allowed to work with white patients. However, over time, doctors and nurses noticed her skill, especially her ability to insert IVs into patients with thin or hard-to-find veins. Clara said her work on parents with darker skin made her adept at finding veins by touch, not sight, a skill the other nurses lacked. Increasingly, white doctors and nurses began asking for Clara's help.

After the 1954 Brown versus Board ruling desegregated Kennestone Hospital, Clara was assigned to several special hospital units. She was asked to head up Kennestone's very first IV team, and later became the only black nurse on the hospital's first coronary team. These were amazing feats for a woman who only a few years earlier had not been allowed to even care for white patients.

As a physician, I had the privilege of working with Clara at Kennestone Hos-

pital. And let me tell you, she is just as respected and beloved now as she was then. In fact, she was one of my favorite nurses. And working with her on the floor, and later when she was a supervisor, always gave me confidence in her ability, her compassion, and her leadership.

I am inspired by Clara Jenkins' ability to prove herself in the face of segregation and discrimination. Clara had a sense of determination and courage that should serve as an inspiration for us all. By asking others to judge her based on skill, not race, she helped break down color barriers for black professionals in Cobb County.

Clara also opened doors for other black nurses. She was once offered a position as head pediatric nurse at Kennestone. But when she turned down the job, another black nurse was selected to head that unit. She brought a greater equality to our hospital.

Clara Jenkins is a skilled nurse and an important member of the Cobb community. Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me in honoring her legacy.

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.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

PRESIDENT'S PROPOSAL FOR PRIVATIZATION OF SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Ms. KILPATRICK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KILPATRICK of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, March is Women's History Month, and we are proud to celebrate the contributions that women have made to American society. As mothers, as caregivers, as teachers, as providers, we honor the women in America this month of March.

While home last week, I had an opportunity to hold two town hall meetings. My first meeting was in Wyandotte, Lincoln Park, River Rouge, and Ecourse communities, where we had hundreds of people who came out to hear about the Social Security proposals. My first point to them was that we have no bill. What we are hearing are discussion points, and right now we have no legislation that has come to the House or the Senate. What we are