

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

INTRODUCING THE SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFICIARY TAX REDUCTION ACT AND THE SENIOR CITIZENS' TAX ELIMINATION ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, today I am pleased to introduce two pieces of legislation to reduce taxes on senior citizens. The first bill, the Social Security Beneficiary Tax Reduction Act, repeals the 1993 tax increase on Social Security benefits. Repealing this increase on Social Security benefits is a good first step toward reducing the burden imposed by the federal government on senior citizens. However, imposing any tax on Social Security benefits is unfair and illogical. This is why I am also introducing the Senior Citizens' Tax Elimination Act, which repeals all taxes on Social Security benefits.

Since Social Security benefits are financed with tax dollars, taxing these benefits is yet another example of double taxation. Furthermore, "taxing" benefits paid by the government is merely an accounting trick, a shell game which allows Members of Congress to reduce benefits by subterfuge. This allows Congress to continue using the Social Security trust fund as a means of financing other government programs, and masks the true size of the federal deficit.

Instead of imposing ridiculous taxes on senior citizens, Congress should ensure the integrity of the Social Security trust fund by ending the practice of using trust fund monies for other programs. This is why I am also introducing the Social Security Preservation Act, which ensures that all money in the Social Security trust fund is spent solely on Social Security. At a time when Congress' inability to control spending is once again threatening the Social Security trust fund, the need for this legislation has never been greater. When the government taxes Americans to fund Social Security, it promises the American people that the money will be there for them when they retire. Congress has a moral obligation to keep that promise.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to help free senior citizens from oppressive taxation by supporting my Senior Citizens' Tax Elimination Act and my Social Security Beneficiary Tax Reduction Act. I also urge my colleagues to ensure that moneys from the Social Security trust fund are used solely for Social Security benefits and not wasted on frivolous government programs.

TRIBUTE TO WALTER THEOPHILUS LUNSFORD, SR.

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a great man and outstanding citizen who passed away on December 28, 2006.

Walter Theophilus Lunsford, Sr. passed away at the age of 90 years old in Columbus, Ga., the city where he was born, raised, and spent much of his life making an impact as a businessman, family man and positive contributor to the community.

Success came early in Mr. Lunsford's life and he never let it go. After graduating as valedictorian from Spencer High School in 1933, he furthered his academic pursuits at Fisk University where as a physics major, he pledged Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity. Later, he became a charter member of the Eta Theta Chapter at Columbus State University, as well as the Columbus Alumni Chapter.

Mr. Lunsford first developed his business acumen by working in the family grocery store. He learned entrepreneurship first-hand as his parents expanded their business into real-estate, building houses at a time when public housing did not exist. He later built on that knowledge at the University of Chicago, studying business administration and international relations.

In the early 1940's, Mr. Lunsford carried his initial business experience into his own ventures, first as the sole owner and proprietor of Fox Deluxe Wholesale Beer Distributing Company and later, as the first black owner of a Georgia taxicab company. At the peak of its operation, he employed over 100 blacks between the Checker, Blue Bird and Red Bird Taxicab Companies. Since much of his clientele was comprised of black soldiers stationed at Fort Benning, his business filled both a social and economic void for members of the local community.

Mr. Lunsford did not stop there—as an offshoot to his taxicab business, he opened a Shell Service Station. Eventually, he closed his taxi business and opened a full auto station and grocery store, a forerunner to the modern convenience store. Along the way, he found a way to integrate his love of entertainment by opening the Pierce Amusement Company, leasing coin-operated vending and game machines to other establishments.

Above all, Mr. Walter Lunsford was a successful, well-respected entrepreneur who placed God and family first. For 62 years, he accomplished it all with his wife, Sally Bryant Lunsford, at his side. Together they raised their ten college-educated children, an accomplishment in itself.

Today, we thank and honor Mr. Lunsford, not only for his contributions to Columbus, but also for the example he set for others. He will be remembered as an inspirational figure to

not only those in Columbus, but to all who have the opportunity to learn about his life.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO HAROLD LEE MEYER

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Harold Lee Meyer who passed away on December 14, 2006.

Born in Paullina, Iowa on January 1, 1927, Harold settled in Littleton, Colorado with his wife of 55 years, Natalie Meyer. After spending his career in the savings and loan industry, Harold used his retirement to give back to his community. Harold was active in both local and state pursuits, having served as a member of the Denver General Hospital Board and as director of Good Shepherd Lutheran Home of the West. As a member of the Littleton City Council and as mayor of the City of Littleton, Harold enriched and improved countless lives. His other philanthropic pursuits included being a member of DRCOG, a volunteer at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, a driver for the Red Cross, and being an active member of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church community.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor the life and legacy of Harold Lee Meyer. His professional success and dedication to community should serve as an example to us all. Harold dedicated his life to enriching the lives of those around him. I applaud all his efforts; he was truly a distinguished humanitarian and will be profoundly missed.

MONTGOMERY GI BILL

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to address an inequity facing America's men and women in uniform who seek an education in return for their military service.

For years, the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) has allowed thousands of men and women in uniform attend college or to receive vocational training to prepare for a new career after the military.

It is an excellent program and one we must preserve.

However, Madam Speaker, I would like to remedy an inequity that exists in this program with legislation I am introducing today.

To receive the benefits of the Montgomery GI Bill, our service members must pay into the program at the beginning of their military service.

A \$100 is deducted each month from their military pay for the first 12 months.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

With the legislation I offer today, our service members would still make the initial contribution. However, this contribution would no longer count against them later on when they apply for federal student aid.

In many cases, Madam Speaker, the Montgomery GI Bill alone does not cover the cost for college or job training. Our service members must also apply for federal student aid to cover tuition and other expenses.

The Department of Education considers their benefits from the Montgomery GI Bill as “income”—thereby reducing the amount they are eligible to receive from federal student aid programs.

This legislation goes back to the \$1,200 out-of-pocket contribution that a service member made to become eligible for the Montgomery GI Bill.

It is not fair to ask our service members to pay the original amount out of their own pocket and then penalize them for it later on.

This bill would simply exempt the original contribution that came from their own pocket from the Department of Education’s income consideration.

This legislation does not present significant cost to the federal government but would go a long way to help America’s individual service members afford college.

During the last Congress, I offered the provisions contained in this legislation as part of the College Access and Opportunity Act (H.R. 609) when it was on the House floor.

Unfortunately, the amendment was not accepted, but I plan to pursue the issue until we correct this inequity.

Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to offer legislation benefiting America’s military service members and helping them to attend college or receive job training.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ANIMAL PROHIBITION ACT OF 2007

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. GALLEGLY. Madam Speaker, today I reintroduce the Animal Fighting Prohibition Act to address the brutal, inhumane practice of animal fighting, something I have been trying to federally criminalize for the past several Congresses.

A few years ago, Congress enacted legislation to tighten federal law and close some loopholes that were allowing the barbaric practices of animal fighting to thrive nationwide, in spite of bans in virtually every state.

But Congress didn’t finish the job. We left in place weak penalties that have proven ineffective. Misdemeanor penalties simply don’t provide a meaningful deterrent. Those involved in animal fighting ventures—where thousands of dollars typically change hands in the associated gambling activity—consider misdemeanor penalties a “slap on the wrist” or merely a “cost of doing business.” Moreover, we’ve heard from U.S. Attorneys that they are reluctant to pursue animal fighting cases with just a misdemeanor penalty.

In recent years, we’ve seen a marked rise in the frequency of animal fighting busts in communities across the country. Local police and sheriffs are increasingly concerned about

animal fighting, not only because of the animal cruelty involved, but also because of the other crimes that often go hand-in-hand, including illegal gambling, drug trafficking, and acts of human violence. Furthermore, there is an inherent danger for the children of animal fighters to be close to these animals.

There is the additional concern that cockfighters spread diseases that jeopardize poultry flocks and even public health. We in California experienced this first-hand, when cockfighters spread exotic Newcastle disease, which was so devastating to many of our poultry producers in 2002 and 2003. That outbreak cost U.S. taxpayers “nearly \$200 million to eradicate, and cost the U.S. poultry industry many millions more in lost export markets,” according to former Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman. Cockfighting has been identified as the major contributor of the spread of avian flu throughout Thailand and other parts of Asia, where the strain originated. Many of the humans who contracted avian flu and died from it contracted it from fighting birds. Experts say it’s just a matter of time before it reaches our shores.

It is time Congress finishes the job and helps state and local law enforcement officials who have requested a strengthening of federal laws to rid animal fighting from communities that do not want it.

This legislation makes violations of federal animal fighting law a felony punishable by up to three years in prison, makes it a felony to transport an animal across state or international borders for the purpose of animal fighting, and prohibits the interstate and foreign commerce in knives and gaffs designed for use in cockfighting.

In the past, this legislation has been endorsed by nearly 400 law enforcement organizations, 110 animal control and humane organizations, and a number of industry organizations as well, and I expect to have their support again. The Animal Fighting Prohibition Act of 2006 had 324 cosponsors and was passed through the Senate by unanimous consent. I ask my colleagues to support this legislation so we can end the deplorable practice of animal fighting and all of the destructive behavior associated with it.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SENIOR’S HEALTH CARE FREEDOM ACT

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, I rise to introduce the Seniors’ Health Care Freedom Act. This act protects seniors’ fundamental right to make their own health care decisions by repeal federal laws that interfere with seniors’ ability to form private contracts for medical services. This bill also repeals laws which force seniors into the Medicare program against their will. When Medicare was first established, seniors were promised that the program would be voluntary. In fact, the original Medicare legislation explicitly protected a senior’s right to seek out other forms of medical insurance. However, the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 prohibits any physician who forms a private contract with a senior from filing any Medicare reimbursement claims for two years.

As a practical matter, this means that seniors cannot form private contracts for health care services.

Seniors may wish to use their own resources to pay for procedures or treatments not covered by Medicare, or to simply avoid the bureaucracy and uncertainty that comes when seniors must wait for the judgment of a Center from Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) bureaucrat before finding out if a desired treatment is covered.

Seniors’ right to control their own health care is also being denied due to the Social Security Administration’s refusal to give seniors who object to enrolling Medicare Part A Social Security benefits. This not only distorts the intent of the creators of the Medicare system; it also violates the promise represented by Social Security. Americans pay taxes into the Social Security Trust Fund their whole working lives and are promised that Social Security will be there for them when they retire. Yet, today, seniors are told that they cannot receive these benefits unless they agree to join an additional government program!

At a time when the fiscal solvency of Medicare is questionable, to say the least, it seems foolish to waste scarce Medicare funds on those who would prefer to do without Medicare. Allowing seniors who neither want nor need to participate in the program to refrain from doing so will also strengthen the Medicare program for those seniors who do wish to participate in it. Of course, my bill does not take away Medicare benefits from any senior. It simply allows each senior to choose voluntarily whether or not to accept Medicare benefits or to use his own resources to obtain health care.

Forcing seniors into government programs and restricting their ability to seek medical care free from government interference infringes on the freedom of seniors to control their own resources and make their own health care decisions. A woman who was forced into Medicare against her wishes summed it up best in a letter to my office, “. . . I should be able to choose the medical arrangements I prefer without suffering the penalty that is being imposed.” I urge my colleagues to protect the right of seniors to make the medical arrangements that best suit their own needs by cosponsoring the Seniors’ Health Care Freedom Act.

TRIBUTE TO MAYOR BOB POYDASHEFF

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 4, 2007

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, today I have the distinct privilege of recognizing a man of remarkable vision and unyielding commitment to the community, which he has so faithfully served. Through the leadership of Mayor Bob Poydasheff, the city of Columbus has experienced extraordinary growth and prosperity. During his tenure as mayor, the area has gained in excess of seven thousand new jobs and under his leadership the Columbus Consolidated Government has exercised fiscal responsibility resulting in balanced budgets and a surplus.

Bob Poydasheff has always exhibited exceptional character throughout his professional