

INTRODUCTION OF THE LOST RETIREMENT SAVINGS ACT OF 2007

HON. JOHN LEWIS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 7, 2007

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, last week I introduced legislation that will help people who worked long hours, went to work everyday to support their families, and thought they were earning a retirement package that would be there at the end of their careers. Unfortunately, many in this body know the crisis some workers have endured regarding their defined benefit pension plans. Many people have felt the sting of lost jobs, reduced benefits, and bankrupt employers. Their retirement savings were lost.

The Lost Retirement Savings Act will allow airline workers to recover some of their benefits that were erased when their employers went bankrupt. By creating a retirement savings option for airline workers whose defined benefit plans were terminated or frozen in bankruptcy proceedings we can offer help to workers. This legislation creates an opportunity for airline workers to rollover specified bankruptcy payments into a traditional or Roth individual retirement account.

Airline workers have lost more than \$5 billion in wages alone. They have lost an additional \$5 billion in defined benefit pension benefits. Some have lost more than their paycheck. Too many people lost their jobs. In my district, which covers metro Atlanta, Delta Air Lines has been particularly hard hit over the past few years. On September 11, there were 10,500 active Delta pilots. Today, there are 6,700.

We need to keep our pension system strong in America. We need to keep it strong for American workers and their families. If the system breaks, we need to stand up for all workers and find a solution. This legislation will restore some lost earnings and some lost opportunities. I look forward to seeing this passed.

INTRODUCTION OF THE "TELEWORK IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2007"

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 7, 2007

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, telework continues to be under utilized by Federal agencies. Improvements are needed to allow more Federal employees to participate in telework programs. Today, Representative SARBANES will join me in introducing legislation that will ensure that agencies make those much needed improvements. Telework provides numerous benefits including increased flexibilities for both employers and employees, continuity of operations during emergency events, and decreased energy use and air pollution.

The Office of Personnel Management, OPM, defines telework as "work arrangements in which an employee regularly performs officially assigned duties at home or other worksites geographically convenient to the residence of

the employee." Many of the current Federal programs were developed in response to a provision included in an appropriations bill enacted in October 2000. This law requires each executive branch agency to establish a telework policy under which eligible employees "may participate in telecommuting to the maximum extent possible without diminishing employee performance." Under the current legislative framework, the General Services Administration, GSA, and OPM have leading roles in implementing government-wide telework initiatives.

Unfortunately, telework is not being used to the extent it should be. According to OPM's most recent report, only about 119,000 of the approximately 1.8 million Federal employees participated in telework in 2005. That figure represents only 6.6 percent of Federal agency employees. Some of the barriers to telework include office coverage, organizational culture, management resistance, and technology security and funding. Today we want to examine ways to address these barriers and encourage teleworking.

On May 7, 2007, I, along with my colleagues, Representative KENNY MARCHANT, full committee Chairman HENRY WAXMAN, and Ranking Member TOM DAVIS sent a letter to 25 Federal departments and agencies requesting information on the telework programs of those agencies. The letter was intended to help us better understand how well agency telework programs are working. What we found is that not only is telework inconsistently defined across agencies, many agencies, do not effectively measure and track teleworkers. Some agencies do not even know how many of their employees actually telework.

In recent years, telework has increasingly been viewed as an important tool for ensuring continuity of essential government services in a time of crisis, such as in the event of a natural disaster or a terrorist attack. To help improve the preparedness of the Federal Government's operation in emergency situations, last session, I introduced H.R. 5366, the "Continuity of Operations Demonstration Project Act." This legislation provided for a demonstration project under which at least two Federal agencies would perform services and operations under a simulated emergency in which Federal employees would have to work at locations away from their usual workplace, including home, for at least 10 consecutive days. A number of agencies have taken the initiative to perform demonstration exercises in the last several years but there are still many agencies that have not done so. I would like to see more agencies test their ability to continue operations in an emergency and incorporate telework into their continuity of operations plans.

Representative JOHN SARBANES, House Oversight and Government Reform Chairman HENRY WAXMAN, and Representative FRANK WOLF have joined me in introducing the "Telework Improvement Act of 2007." This legislation breaks new ground by ensuring that eligible Federal employees have the opportunity to telework and that agencies are incorporating telework into their continuity of operations planning. The Act spurs Federal agencies to improve their telework policies by requiring every Federal agency to develop a telework program that allows employees to telework at least 20 percent of every 2-week work period, designate a senior level em-

ployee as a telework managing officer, and incorporate telework into their continuity of operations planning.

Our expectation is that this legislation will increase the number of Federal employees that are allowed to telework and thereby better prepare the Government for emergency events, reduce congestion and pollution, and create a more family-friendly workplace.

TRIBUTE TO MRS. MARGARET DREWNIAK

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 7, 2007

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Madam Speaker, it is with great respect and admiration that I stand before you today to recognize the many accomplishments of Mrs. Margaret (Marge) Drewniak. I can truly say that Marge is one of Northwest Indiana's most dedicated, distinguished, and honorable citizens. She is one of the most involved citizens that I have ever known, especially when it comes to her service to the people of Whiting, Indiana. For the past 37 years, Marge has been a constant fixture in Whiting, fully committed in her various capacities as a public servant. Most notably, Marge has served as the Clerk-Treasurer for the City of Whiting for the past 26 years. Though Marge has decided not to run for reelection, her efforts over the course of her tenure, and the impact she has had on the city and the people of Whiting will forever be remembered. To honor Marge, a reception will be held at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Whiting, Indiana, on Saturday, November 10, 2007.

One of 3 children, Margaret Kotyuk was born to Frank and Emma (Mitro) Kotyuk in Whiting, Indiana. A lifelong resident of Whiting, Marge attended the Whiting public schools. Upon her graduation, prior to beginning her career as a public servant, Marge was employed as a bookkeeper. Undoubtedly, it was during that time that Marge developed the skills that would be critical in her role as clerk-treasurer.

Marge began her career in the public sector in Whiting in 1970, where she served in various capacities within several departments under former Mayor Frank Harangody. In 1974, she was named deputy clerk-treasurer, a position she held until 1981, when she was appointed to complete the term of the late clerk-treasurer, Mary Jancek. This began Marge's 26-year tenure as Whiting's clerk-treasurer. During that time, she worked with four mayors: Frank Harangody, Joseph Grenchik, Robert Bercik, and current Mayor Joseph Stahura. Marge also served as a precinct vice-committeeperson and volunteered countless hours for the Whiting Democratic Precinct Organization during her tenure.

In her capacity as clerk-treasurer, Marge has been a member of many organizations throughout the years, including: the Indiana League of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers, the International Institute of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers, the Municipal Treasurers' Association of the United States and Canada, the Government Finance Officers Association, and the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns. Outside her elected position, Marge is

well-known to be an active member in several organizations within the Whiting community, including: the Whiting-Robertsdale Chamber of Commerce, the Knights of Columbus Wives Club, the Daughters of Isabella, the Whiting-Robertsdale Historical Society, the Sacred Heart Rosary Society, and the Friends of the Library.

While Marge's everyday presence will be missed at Whiting City Hall, she will now have a chance to spend more time to those closest to her—her family. A loving wife, mother, and grandmother, Marge's commitment to her community is surpassed only by her love for her family. Marge and her loving husband, Henry, have been married for an astonishing 55 years. With Marge's retirement, they plan to spend as much time as possible with their 3 children: Nancy (Michael) Pappas, James (Martha) Drewniak, and Ron (Lisa) Drewniak, and their adoring grandchildren: Brian and Kelly Pappas and Eric and Scott Drewniak.

Madam Speaker, Marge Drewniak has selflessly given her time and efforts to the people of Whiting, Indiana, throughout her years of service. At this time, I ask that you and all of my distinguished colleagues join me in commending her for her lifetime of service and dedication, and I ask that you join me in wishing her the best of health and happiness in the years to come.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION
OF H.R. 3043, DEPARTMENTS OF
LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN
SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND
RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS
ACT, 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Mr. LANGEVIN. Madam Speaker, I wish to express my support of H.R. 3043, the Fiscal Year 2008 Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Military Construction-Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act.

I have increasingly heard grave concerns from Rhode Islanders about the cuts and limitations in critical domestic programs over the past 6 years. Currently, one in six Americans is without health insurance, our schools are in desperate need of resources to meet the standards set in No Child Left Behind, and the recent housing slump and credit crunch have left our economy in trouble. Our safety net programs are more important than ever, as Americans work hard to keep their families healthy and their finances in order.

This legislation takes important steps to address the problems faced by so many Americans and prioritizes funding for those programs that have suffered the most under cuts by the Republican leadership in recent years. I am proud that Democrats have crafted a bill that will increase funding for Community Health Centers and Title VII programs, designed to increase access to health services for the medically underserved. This measure will also improve education by targeting resources toward special education and Title I grants to help low-income students and by increasing the maximum Pell Grant from \$4,310

to \$4,925, making college more affordable for many students. And it rejects the President's proposed cuts for medical research at the National Institutes of Health by supplying a level of funding that will sustain existing, cutting-edge research into diseases like cancer, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and heart disease. Finally, it provides \$2.4 billion for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program—\$250 million more than the current level—offering much-needed relief to the residents of Rhode Island, who are now facing the highest prices for home heating oil on record.

The Democratic leadership has also addressed the challenges facing our veterans by restoring accountability and oversight to ensure they receive the care they deserve. H.R. 3043 provides the biggest increase in veterans benefits in over 75 years, and the need could not be more urgent. This legislation includes an increase of \$18 billion above the current level for military construction and veterans affairs, and is also \$3.8 billion above the President's request. I am also pleased that this bill recognizes the concerns and reflects the advice of our veterans, by not only meeting, but exceeding the independent budget request, a needs estimate published by four veterans' service groups. This increase is critical to meet the needs of the many returning veterans who are suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or Traumatic Brain Injury and require better care to successfully rebuild their lives. Additional funding will help alleviate the backlogged claim process and provide much-needed maintenance for VA health care facilities. The support shown by this Congress is a testament to the priority all of us place on our veterans.

In closing, I want to express my thanks to Chairman OBEY for reconciling so many diverse needs to craft a fair and fiscally responsible package, and reiterate my support for H.R. 3043.

CELEBRATING ABINGTON SENIOR
HIGH SCHOOL'S VETERANS HIS-
TORY PROJECT PARTICIPATION

HON. ALLYSON Y. SCHWARTZ

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 7, 2007

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate Abington Senior High School in Abington Township, PA, on their outstanding participation in the Veteran History Project of the Library of Congress. Students and teachers have contributed their time and skills to preserving the remarkable experiences of our war veterans from all service branches, from World War I to the present day Iraq War, as well as the civilians who supported them. I am privileged to represent these students and teachers in Congress.

The Veterans History Project preserves the legacy of those who have served through the establishment of a permanent national collection, housed in the Library of Congress, of videotaped and recorded interviews, written memoirs, and wartime letters, diaries, and photographs. Stories and materials are available to anyone visiting the Library. In addition, a web page is created for each veteran who contributes an interview.

As our Nation's World War II and Korean veterans grow older, it is critical that we record their stories. Their experiences offer a priceless window into their dedication and love of country. As the daughter of a Korean War veteran, this effort has special personal meaning for me. We have much to learn from those who have served our Nation, and I wholeheartedly support this important project.

On this Veterans Day, November 12, 2007, I am proud to recognize Abington Senior High School's Veterans History Project participation at a special event, Preserving Their Stories: A Salute to Veterans History Project Volunteers, at the Hiway Theatre in Jenkintown. This special celebration will bring together Americans, both young and older, with veterans of all ages, to honor their common service to their fellow citizens and country.

Madam Speaker, once again I congratulate all of the Veterans History Project participants for their contributions to capturing the experiences of war veterans, thus honoring the lives and contributions of these extraordinary Americans.

IN HONOR OF NAVY VETERAN AND
PEARL HARBOR SURVIVOR
ERNAL UNDERWOOD

HON. CHRIS CANNON

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 7, 2007

Mr. CANNON. Madam Speaker, as Veteran's Day approaches, I rise in strong support of all who have ever worn the uniform. From the fields of Bunker Hill to the streets of Baghdad, and everywhere in between, American service members represent the very best of our Nation and deserve more than we can ever repay. But today I want to pay particular tribute to a resident of my district who is part of an elite club—Ernal Underwood is one of twelve Pearl Harbor survivors currently living in the State of Utah.

Mr. Underwood joined the Navy on January 7, 1941. Less than 1 year later Mr. Underwood found himself docked at Pearl Harbor on the USS *Helena*. On December 7, 1941 an aerial torpedo struck the USS *Helena* while Mr. Underwood was climbing down a ladder below the deck, on his way to write his wife a letter.

After his ship was hit, Mr. Underwood immediately ran to his battle station, picked up his weapon, and engaged the enemy. Mr. Underwood fired until his gun became too hot. After he ran to fetch a bucket of water in order to cool it down, on the way back to his station, he said he had an impression to "stop." A few seconds later fire from an enemy aircraft pelted the cement on both sides of him. Fortunately, Mr. Underwood came away unscathed. Mr. Underwood's best friend was not so lucky. Later, Ernal Underwood was asked to identify the charred body of his best friend, Benjamin Vasser. Mr. Underwood found his buddy badly burned, but alive enough to blink a response to him. That was the last time Mr. Underwood would see his friend alive.

Less than 2 years later on July 6, 1943, Ernal Underwood found himself in the middle of the Kula Gulf battle in the South Pacific. That day the USS *Helena* suffered three direct hits from enemy torpedoes. The ship broke