

retirees without raising payroll taxes or further depleting the trust funds.

The facts are undeniable: demographics are driving Social Security's looming insolvency. Modern medicine is helping people live longer, and families are having fewer children. As a result, the number of seniors is growing faster than the number of workers supporting Social Security.

According to the 2006 report of the Social Security Board of Trustees, the number of retirees receiving Social Security benefits will grow five times faster than the working population over the next 10 years. Social Security tax revenue will fall short of benefit costs beginning in 2017. By 2040, Social Security revenues will be sufficient enough to finance only 74 percent of promised benefits. At that time, according to trustee estimates, benefits will have to be cut 25 percent, or the payroll tax will have to be increased by 34 percent to pay full promised benefits.

We must refocus our concern and reinvigorate our efforts to address the serious challenges Social Security programs face. This is not a Republican or Democrat issue, it's an American issue. The choices without reform are stark: massive benefit cuts, enormous deficits, or huge tax increases. We should not leave these problems for our children and grandchildren to solve.

The legislation that I have proposed, the "Social Security Guarantee Plus Act," initially proposed by former Congressman Clay Shaw and former Chairman Bill Archer in previous Congresses, would keep the Social Security safety net intact, ensuring full receipt of Social Security benefits for all current and future American workers.

The Guarantee Plus plan establishes a voluntary program that would allow workers to receive a refundable income tax credit equal to 4 percent of their annual earnings, up to \$1,000, to invest in a tax-free retirement account. Instead of restructuring existing payroll taxes, general treasury revenues would be used to fund retirement accounts. Individual workers, not the government, would control how their account assets are invested to create growth. Real assets, not IOU's, would fund promised benefits.

At retirement or when otherwise eligible, a 5 percent tax free lump sum payment would be paid directly to the worker. The balance would be used to help pay full guaranteed Social Security benefits. In order to preserve funds for retirement, account withdrawals would be prohibited until a worker becomes eligible for traditional Social Security benefits. Accounts would be inheritable and tax-free if a worker dies before reaching retirement.

The Guarantee Plus plan incorporates three core principles: all workers are treated fairly; individuals own and control their own retirement funds; Social Security benefits are guaranteed in full to all Americans through the next 75 years and beyond without increasing taxes, lowering benefits or raising the retirement age.

Because Social Security benefits are based on earnings, women are disadvantaged when they choose to stay home to raise their children. Longer life expectancies also make woman more likely to struggle with poverty in old age. The Guarantee Plus plan addresses this inequity by enhancing benefits for widows, divorced spouses, and working mothers. These benefits would become immediately available.

The plan would also eliminate the retirement earnings penalty for all workers age 62 and older and reduce the current Government Pension Offset that limits spouse and survivor benefits for certain government employees.

The Social Security Administration's Office of the Actuary estimates that every borrowed dollar necessary to begin the program, in addition to accrued interest, would be repaid with 75 years, achieving permanent solvency. In sum, we would payoff the mortgage on Social Security while leaving workers with substantial account balances and generating surplus revenues for the Federal Government.

Everyone agrees that the Social Security program is integral to the financial stability of millions of Americans who have left the workforce due to retirement or disability as well as those who are dependent upon survivor benefits following the death of a parent or spouse. We must put partisan politics aside and do what is best for today's seniors and tomorrow's retirees.

Our recent success at passing sweeping measures to modernize welfare and worker pensions shows that effective reform is possible. In similar spirit, Congress needs to work together to explore every possible option to restore confidence in Social Security and ensure program solvency for generations to come.

I believe the Social Security Guarantee Plus plan accomplishes this goal in the most comprehensive, fair, and cost-effective manner. I encourage my colleagues to consider their support for this bill as a step toward permanent preservation of the Social Security program.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION GIVING TAX RELIEF FOR THE NATION'S MILITARY FAMILIES

HON. SCOTT GARRETT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 15, 2007

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, the resolution debated this week in the House says, "Congress and the American people will continue to support and protect the members of the United States Armed Forces." Today, I am introducing legislation, the Armed Forces Tax Relief Act of 2007, and the Strengthening America's Military Families Act of 2007 that will do precisely that. Both bills would put more money into the pockets of our troops fighting in a combat zone.

Members of the Armed Forces currently serving in a combat zone are exempt from having their earnings taxed under the federal income tax. However, their pay is still subject to "employment taxes," such as the significant payroll taxes for Medicare and Social Security. The Armed Forces Tax Relief Act changes this, and truly allows our fighting men and women to keep their earnings tax free. Compared to the sacrifice that our troops make in the field, the amount we compensate them is not nearly enough. And while their sense of duty to their country is not tied to the size of their paychecks, enacting this legislation would put real extra money into the pockets of our Armed Forces, and send them a message that we are working hard in Washington to support them.

Oftentimes we forget that when the military is called overseas to fight in combat, many

leave behind a well-paying job, a family, and children. The second bill I have introduced, the Strengthening America's Military Families Act of 2007, seeks to strengthen those families at home while their spouses are fighting abroad. With this legislation, the federal income tax exemption that we currently offer to members of the Armed Forces fighting in designated combat zones would be extended to their spouses. This way, during the months that our soldiers are fighting, they can have some peace of mind that their absence at home will not be wrought with financial hardship on their families.

REMEMBERING "MR.
BURLINGAME," VICTOR MANGINI

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 15, 2007

Mr. LANTOS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and commemorate the life of my dear friend Victor Mangini, who died of congestive heart failure on February 4, 2007 at the age of 88. "Vic," as he was often called, was an extraordinary human being, and a regarded educator, coach and public servant. His commitment to his adopted city of Burlingame, California rightfully earned him the title "Mr. Burlingame."

Born in Manhattan, Victor earned his Bachelor's Degree from Manhattan College and his teaching credential from Columbia University. As a young man, Victor joined the Armed Services and was stationed at the Presidio of San Francisco, where he played a key role as a training officer. Victor's commitment to our Nation's military continued after the War, as he joined the Air Force Reserve, retiring at the rank of Colonel after 37 years of service.

Madam Speaker, much like both of us, Victor Mangini fell deeply in love with the Bay Area of California and sought to make it his permanent home. The wonderful community of Burlingame located in the beautiful 12th Congressional District of California, which I am immensely proud to represent, is where Victor wisely chose to live and raise his family.

After the end of World War II, Victor Mangini moved down the Peninsula and started what became an illustrious 44-year career at Burlingame High School. During his tenure at Burlingame High School, Vic's involvement in the education and well-being of young scholars and athletes occurred in the classroom as history teacher and later as the assistant principal, and also on the athletic field, where he coached both the football and track teams. Because of outstanding and extraordinary dedication to the school, in May 2001 the Burlingame City Council voted to name the street in front of Burlingame High School after him. The high school address now reads 1 Mangini Way. That same year, Vic was also honored by his induction into the San Mateo County Sports Hall of Fame.

Vic's commitment to educating youth went far beyond his high school classroom. For over 55 years he headed the scholarship selection committee for the Frank H. and Eva B. Buck Foundation, which provides full scholarships and support to more than two hundred students seeking higher education in California.

Madam Speaker, Victor Magnini's impressive résumé and limitless talents did not only extend to academic endeavors. He was president of the Burlingame Rotary Club, and as an active member of the Our Lady of Angels Church in Burlingame, California, Victor proved his loyalty to his adopted city and in 1957, during the Golden Anniversary of the City of Burlingame, he rightfully earned the title "Citizen of the Year" from his fellow community members.

Vic was also very active in local politics. He successfully ran for Burlingame City Council in

1970, an office he held till he decided to retire in 1989. Vic served four separate terms as Mayor of the city of Burlingame during his nearly twenty-year tenure on the council.

A devoted family man, Victor was married to Rina Sari for 27 years, before she succumbed to breast cancer in 1975. They raised two children, Mariavittoria (Vicki) and Martin Jerome (Jerry). Victor later married Grace Cecilia Mangini, who passed away in 2003 following another 27 years of happy marriage.

Madam Speaker, there is a reason all city flags in Burlingame, California flew at half-staff

for 4 days following Victor Mangini's death. The whole city of Burlingame mourned the passing of this extraordinary human being, who exemplified the highest class of American citizens, whose commitment to the improvement of society and country is unwavering. Victor Mangini spent his life making his community a better place, and I, along with every single resident of the City of Burlingame, California am deeply indebted to this true American hero.