

One of the most critical responsibilities of this panel will be explaining the crisis we face and listening to the American people about how to get the country back on sound financial footing. It will also develop a strategic plan for the future. It will look beyond the Beltway for solutions, holding at least 12 town meetings—one in each of the Nation's Federal Reserve districts—over the span of 12 months in order to hear directly from the American people.

The SAFE Commission will be truly bipartisan—comprised of 16 voting members, four appointed by the Senate Majority Leader, three by the Senate Minority Leader, four by the Speaker of the House, and three by the House Minority Leader. Four of the 14 congressional appointments must be sitting members of Congress. Additionally, the director of the Office of Management and Budget as well as the secretary of the Treasury will serve as voting ex-officio members. The Congressional Budget Office and the Comptroller General of the United States will be appointed as non-voting ex-officio members of the commission to lend their expertise. The president will appoint bipartisan co-chairs from among the 14 voting members appointed by Congress.

I have heard criticism that such weighty decisions on the Nation's financial future are the responsibility of Congress. I couldn't agree more. The SAFE Commission has two provisions to protect congressional prerogatives. First, of the 14 members appointed to the commission, four must be sitting members of Congress. Second, if Congress takes on the task and enacts significant legislation aimed at addressing this looming crisis, the SAFE Commission would terminate and cease to exist.

The group will comprehensively review entitlement benefits, patterns in savings and insurance for retirement, tax policies and the long-term implications of increasing foreign ownership of the U.S. Treasury. But given the enormity of the challenge, the commission needs to be able to look at every component of our fiscal policy to fairly assess where we stand and how we can best move toward a sound fiscal future. Everything must be on the table. As a fiscal conservative, I believe that the economy grows when people keep more of their hard-earned money, and my voting record reflects this belief.

The SAFE Commission is tasked with addressing tax issues as well as spending policies because current law puts us on a track to sharply higher taxes as well as spending. If the current tax cuts are sunset, then beginning in 2011, taxes as a percent of GDP will jump and then rise each and every year to nearly 20 percent of GDP in 2016, less than 10 years from now. After that they will keep on growing to record levels, hitting over 23 percent in 2046. This happens because rising incomes push Americans into both higher brackets and into the alternative minimum tax (AMT). Yet even extending the tax cuts will have only one percentage point off these rising numbers.

Americans need to understand all the numbers to avoid the grim default of a rising burden of taxes and spending that will damage our economy. I believe that having revenues as part of the discussion, as one of the areas of reform for the SAFE Commission, will help us paint the full picture and help us confront the tax increases that the country faces in the coming years under current law.

In looking at revenues, I believe reform of the tax code must help simplify the system

and stimulate increased economic growth and thereby tax revenue. The late William Simon, who served as Treasury secretary under presidents Nixon and Ford, believed "the United States should have a tax system, which looks like someone designed it on purpose."

The IRS estimates Americans spend 6.6 billion hours per year filling out tax forms including 1.6 billion hours on the 1040 form alone and nearly \$200 billion on tax compliance. That amounts to 20 cents of compliance cost for every dollar collected by the tax system.

Shouldn't we have a system that people understand? One that encourages faster growth in business formation, jobs, family income and tax revenue? A simplified tax code also could help increase the personal savings rate, which went negative for the first time since the Great Depression earlier this year.

The SAFE Commission legislation provides an opportunity to simultaneously address the likely tax increases that middle class Americans are projected to face and the explosion in entitlement programs. It does this by focusing on reform. The legislation provides an opportunity to reform the tax code in ways that generate more rapid growth. We know from the recent revenue figures that tax policies that spur growth also bring in needed revenue. And the legislation also tasks the commission with exploring entitlement reforms that protect safety net programs while reining in total costs.

After spending 12 months conducting town meetings around the country to determine the scope of the problem and consider solutions, the commission will present to Congress a report describing the long-term fiscal problems, public suggestions and views expressed during the town meetings and policy options available to ensure federal programs and entitlements are available for future generations.

With a bipartisan three-fourths majority vote, the commission will send to Congress a legislative package to implement the commission recommendations no later than 60 days after the interim report. The administration and Congress will have 90 additional days to develop actuarially equivalent proposals to achieve the same cost savings. Essentially, no later than 16 months from the organization of the commission, Congress would be required to vote—up or down—on each proposal.

For example, if the commission's report is delivered on January 1, 2008, then the commission's legislative package would be due by March 1, 2008, and any alternative developed by Congress or the Administration would have to be presented by June 1, 2008.

All proposals must include a 50-year CBO score in addition to disclosing any impact on future federal liabilities. If more than one proposal receives a majority, the one garnering the greatest number of votes would prevail.

I have put in the legislation procedures for expedited consideration of the commission's legislation to ensure that the Congress acts. I do not want this to simply be another blue-ribbon commission whose findings end up on a bookshelf somewhere only to collect dust and never be acted upon.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to enact this legislation. I also welcome a forthright national dialogue. Only by working together in a truly bipartisan manner will we be able to secure America's future economy. I believe most Americans will welcome it as well, especially considering we all want what is best for our children and grandchildren.

I will close with the cautionary words of George Washington's 1796 farewell address: "We should avoid ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burden of which we ourselves ought to bear."

REMEMBERING CALVIN WILLIAM VERITY, JR.

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 12, 2007

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, former Secretary of Commerce Calvin William Verity Jr., 89, of Beaufort, South Carolina, died Wednesday, January 3, 2007, at the Beaufort Memorial Hospital. He was born January 26, 1917, in Middletown, Ohio, the son of Calvin William Verity, Sr. and Elizabeth (O'Brien) Verity.

Secretary Verity was a graduate of the Phillips Exeter Academy and Yale University. He served as a Lieutenant in the U.S. Navy from 1942–1946. Mr. Verity worked for Armco Steel from 1946 until his retirement in 1982 as CEO and Chairman of the Board. He was named Secretary of Commerce by President Ronald Reagan in 1987 and served two years in that position. During the 1970s and 80s he served as Chairman of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and as Chairman of the U.S.-Soviet Trade and Economic Council. He was also the Chairman of the Presidents Task force on Private Sector Initiatives under President Reagan.

Secretary Verity is survived by his daughter and son-in-law, Peggy "Happy" Verity Power and J.P. Power of Edwards, Colorado; two sons and daughters-in-law, Jonathan George Verity and Victoria Verity of Beaufort, South Carolina, and William Wymond Verity and Paula Verity of Beaufort, South Carolina; seven grandchildren, William Verity Power (Kate), Jonathan Warfield Power (Jody), Jonathan Edward Verity, Victoria Heye Verity Nellen (Bill), Elizabeth Wymond Verity, George Murray Verity, and Hannah Bakewell Verity; four great grandchildren, James Matthew Power, John Gray Power, Thomas George Power, and Brooks Verity Power; and two sisters, Betsy Verity Blakey of Columbus, Ohio and Jean Verity Woodhull of Dayton, Ohio.

On January 5, Sandra Walsh of the Beaufort Gazette penned the below tribute to Mr. Verity:

FORMER SECRETARY OF COMMERCE DIES IN BEAUFORT

Serving as President Ronald Reagan's Secretary of Commerce, Calvin William Verity Jr., shared the stage with political giants.

But in Beaufort, where Verity shared his Spanish Point home with his beloved wife, he is remembered by friends as a 'giant of a man.'

Verity died Wednesday, Jan. 3, 2007, in Beaufort Memorial Hospital. He was 89.

Verity, who suffered from asthma, had been hospitalized for four days and died from complications of pneumonia, his oldest son John Verity said Thursday.

"I think the key to his success over the years was his ability to work with people," John Verity said.

"His leadership was based on building consensus and creating an environment where people would work together."

Verity was sworn in as President Ronald Reagan's Secretary of Commerce Oct. 19,

1987, after secretary Malcolm Baldrige was killed in a rodeo accident. He served until the end of Reagan's term in January 1989.

As U.S. Secretary of Commerce, Verity established the Malcolm Baldrige Award, which "in the 1990s helped businesses improve the quality of their work," John Verity said.

He then retired and moved to Beaufort's Spanish Point neighborhood in the early '90s with his wife, Peggy, who died in 1999.

"He was a giant of a man," Verity's next door neighbor and friend of 21 years, Guy McSweeney, said Thursday. "He was one of the most remarkable men I have ever known; everyone that knew him loved him."

Between 1970 and the 1980s, Verity served as chairman of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and as chairman of the U.S.-Soviet Trade and Economic Council.

Reagan also appointed him as the chairman of the President's Task Force on Private Sector Initiatives.

Verity worked for Armco Steel from 1946 until he retired in 1982 as chairman of the board of the company now known as AK Steel Corp. He is the grandson of George M. Verity, who founded the firm.

Verity was a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy from 1942 to 1946.

McSweeney said Verity maintained a lifelong interest in the Navy.

About 10 years ago, McSweeney said he and Verity rode aboard what was originally a Soviet training ship, the Druzhba, from the Bahamas to Maryland alongside 200 U.S. Navy and Russian cadets.

"He was always coming up with something fun to do," McSweeney said. "From duck hunting or riding on a jet to California, he was always into something."

Neighbor Polly Swenson recalled a time when former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor visited Verity at his Spanish Point home and caught a speckled bass from his dock.

Swenson said even in his later years, when Verity used a motorized scooter, he would sit on a bluff behind his home nearly every day and look out to the water.

"He would always say, 'Isn't this the most beautiful place on Earth?'" Swenson said. "Beaufort was very much a part of him."

Verity and his wife played active roles in Beaufort's community and were responsible for raising money for several organizations, including a Verity scholarship fund through the Technical College of the Lowcountry and an education fund for the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Lowcountry.

"He just loved people," longtime friend Helen Harvey said. "He loved to help people; he did so much for so many people through his connections."

St. Helena Island resident and freelance editor Cheryl Lopaniuk helped Verity organize information for his biography, "59 Years with the Right Woman," a recollection of Verity's life with a focus on his wife, self-published in 2003.

"He was devastated in losing her, but he wanted to put this book together because he knew it would have made her happy," Lopaniuk said. "He had wonderful stories and memories that were very exact . . . He had a very good perspective on his life."

Verity was born Jan. 26, 1917, in Middletown, Ohio, a son of Elizabeth O'Brien and Calvin William Verity Sr.

He was a graduate of the Phillips Exeter Academy and Yale University.

Verity was a member of the boards of directors of Mead Corp., Chase Manhattan Bank, Eli Lilly, Taft Broadcasting, the First National Bank in Middletown and The Chairman of the Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C.

Survivors include a daughter, Peggy "Happy" Verity Power of Edwards, Colo.;

two sons, Jonathan George Verity and William Wymond Verity of Beaufort; two sisters, Betsy Verity Blakey of Columbus, Ohio, and Jean Verity Woodhull of Dayton, Ohio; seven grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Services will be at 11 a.m. Saturday at The First Presbyterian Church, Beaufort. The family will receive friends after services at 120 Spanish Point Drive, Beaufort.

Burial will be at the Woodside Cemetery in Middletown.

Memorials may be made to the Bill and Peggy Verity Career Education Fund for the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Lowcountry, 17B Marshellen Drive, Beaufort, SC 29902.

IN MEMORY OF OFFICER DWAYNE FREETO

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 12, 2007

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to share the collective grief of the people of North Texas in the death of Fort Worth Officer Dwayne Freeto, who died in a car crash while stopping to assist a young woman with a flat tire.

The young woman, Adriana Delgadillo, refers to Officer Dwayne Freeto as "a guardian angel." As a dedicated servant of the community as well as a loving father and husband, Mr. Freeto was not going to leave Miss Delgadillo until he knew she was safe. His amiable character and devotion to others are few among many qualities that contributed to his heroic nature. The grief from his loss is not only shared by his family and fellow police brethren but also by the greater Tarrant County area.

Mr. Dwayne Freeto was a wonderful father to his two daughters, Jordin and Jenna, and treasured spending time with them. He also loved his wife, Karen Freeto, dearly, and despite the unusual hours he was assigned to patrol, he always ate meals with his wife and daughters before work. Officer Dwayne Freeto's personality and selflessness made him a trusted friend, devoted husband and father, and a grateful son.

As a patrol officer, Mr. Freeto's courage and loyalty brought hope of a safer community—my community. He will be remembered as a husband and father, a hero, and a friend. I extend my deepest sympathies to his family and friends; he was a true gift to this world.

RECOGNIZES CENTENARIAN WINONAH GREENE OF HERNANDO COUNTY, FLORIDA

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 12, 2007

Mr. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Winonah Greene of Hernando County, Florida. Winonah has done something that all of us strive to do, but that very few of us will ever accomplish, celebrate her 100th birthday.

Born January 13, 1906 in Petersburg, Virginia, Winonah graduated from high school with honors and received a four-year scholar-

ship to college. Her fondest childhood memories are of the times she spent in school and church and her involvement in many community programs and services.

Hired as a schoolteacher, Winonah taught at different schools in Virginia and Pennsylvania for twenty years. She then began working as a government clerk at the Veterans Administration's offices in Pennsylvania, where she worked for another twenty years. An active member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority for 80 years, she has been a member of the Omega Omega Chapter since 1946, which recently celebrated its 80th year.

During her years as a teacher, Winonah proudly took part in the civil rights movement and attended an event where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Was a speaker. She spoke of this personal experience as a part of America's history in her classroom teachings.

Winonah married Ervie Greene in 1942 and was blessed with one daughter. Following her husband's death in 1983, Winonah lived alone in Pennsylvania until she moved to Hernando County in January of 2006 to be closer to her family.

Winonah now spends time with her two grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. She says the advantage of being close to so many businesses and the friendliness of the community is what she likes best about Hernando County. Winonah says the proudest moment in her life was a surprise celebration of her 100th birthday!

Her advice to young people today is, "Work hard, stay in school, select a dream and work towards its success. You can do it if you try!" Madam Speaker, I ask that you join me in honoring Winonah Greene for reaching her 100th birthday. I hope we all have the good fortune to live as long as her.

MOURNING THE PASSING OF PRESIDENT GERALD RUDOLPH FORD

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 9, 2007

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 15, a resolution to honor the late President Gerald Ford who passed away on December 26, 2006. A man of great honor and integrity who led this country through one of the most difficult times in our history, he will be remembered as a fair, respected leader who was able to rise above partisanship to serve the citizens of this nation.

President Ford, born in Omaha, Nebraska and raised in Grand Rapids, Michigan, embodied the spirit of the Midwest. He was hardworking, modest, unassuming, and throughout his life held an unabashed pride in the University of Michigan where he starred on the football team. During World War II, President Ford earned the title of lieutenant commander and several honors while serving this country in the U.S. Navy.

Mr. Ford began his political career when he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives as the Representative from Grand Rapids, Michigan. He held that seat from 1949 until 1973, and of the 25 years he served in the House, he was minority leader for 8.