

distinct from the congressional office records of the Chair, shall be the property of the House, and all Members of the House shall have access thereto as provided in clause 2(e)(2) of rule XI of the Rules of the House.

(4) The records of the Committee at the National Archives and Records Administration shall be made available for public use in accordance with rule VII of the rules of the House. The Chair shall notify the ranking minority member of any decision, pursuant to clause 3(b)(3) or clause 4(b) of the rule, to withhold a record otherwise available, and the matter shall be presented to the Committee for a determination on written request of any member of the Committee.

Committee publications on the internet

(c) To the maximum extent feasible, the Committee shall make its publications available in electronic form.

Calendars

(d)(1) The Committee shall maintain a Committee Calendar, which shall include all bills, resolutions, and other matters referred to or reported by the Committee and all bills, resolutions, and other matters reported by any other committee on which a rule has been granted or formally requested, and such other matters as the Chair shall direct. The Calendar shall be published periodically, but in no case less often than once in each session of Congress.

(2) The staff of the Committee shall furnish each member of the Committee with a list of all bills or resolutions (A) reported from the Committee but not yet considered by the House, and (B) on which a rule has been formally requested but not yet granted. The list shall be updated each week when the House is in session.

(3) For purposes of paragraphs (1) and (2), a rule is considered as formally requested when the Chairman of a committee which has reported a bill or resolution (or a member of such committee authorized to act on the Chairman's behalf):

(A) has requested, in writing to the Chair, that a hearing be scheduled on a rule for the consideration of the bill or resolution, and

(B) has supplied the Committee with an adequate number of copies of the bill or resolution, as reported, together with the final printed committee report thereon.

Other procedures

(e) The Chair may establish such other Committee procedures and take such actions as may be necessary to carry out these rules or to facilitate the effective operation of the Committee and its subcommittees in a manner consistent with these rules.

RULE 9—AMENDMENTS TO COMMITTEE RULES

The rules of the Committee may be modified, amended or repealed, in the same manner and method as prescribed for the adoption of committee rules in clause 2 of rule XI of the Rules of the House, but only if written notice of the proposed change has been provided to each such Member at least 48 hours before the time of the meeting at which the vote on the change occurs. Any such change in the rules of the Committee shall be published in the Congressional Record within 30 calendar days after their approval.

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

(Mr. POE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

NATION'S LOOMING FINANCIAL CRISIS NEEDS A BIPARTISAN SOLUTION

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

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, last spring I took a trip to Antietam National Battlefield. As I walked along Bloody Lane, the site of one of the most vicious battles of the Civil War, I was struck by how many individuals made the ultimate sacrifice.

September 18, 1862, was the bloodiest day in American history. There were more than 23,000 casualties, nine times as many Americans killed or wounded in World War II's D-day on June 6, 1944. More soldiers were killed and wounded at the Battle of Antietam than the deaths of all Americans in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Mexican War and the Spanish-American war combined.

I also visited the site of the George Washington's crossing of the Delaware in anticipation of the Battle of Trenton. Washington was down to only 3,000 soldiers and the war was almost lost. Yet with great courage and sacrifice, Washington and his forces were successful in changing the direction of the American Revolution.

I also think of the tremendous sacrifice being made by thousands of men and women serving today not only in Iraq and Afghanistan but around the globe. Their families at home are also making great sacrifices.

After those visits and the lessons in history they brought, I began reading about the looming financial crisis on the Nation's horizon with the impending retirement of the baby boom generation. That information was chilling.

In less than a year, the baby boom generation will begin trickling into retirement. A few years later, that trickle will become a flood. And within 5 more years, it will become a tsunami that will begin to wreak havoc on the Social Security and Medicare systems.

Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security consume 40 percent of the budget in 2006, but will consume 51 percent in 2016, which is just the tip of the Democratic iceberg.

There is near unanimous consent by all who have looked at this issue. Social Security and Medicare are amassing huge deficits, and we are ill prepared for the coming flood of new baby boom retirees. When our retirement security programs like Social Security and Medicare were established, the ratio of workers supporting each retiree was more than 10 times the number supporting retirees today. In 1945, there were 42 workers for each retiree. Last year, the ratio dropped to three workers for each retiree and is expected to drop to just two workers for each retiree in 2030.

In reading about the coming financial emergency, my mind kept going back to Antietam and Washington's crossing and all the substantive exam-

ples of sacrifice for country by Americans. I asked myself, what kind of financial security as a Nation are we passing on to those who are coming after us?

While there never is a convenient time to make hard decisions, the longer we wait, the more dramatic the remedy will be that is required.

According to the Government Accountability Office, balancing the budget in 2040 necessitates one of two alternatives: Cutting total Federal spending by 60 percent, and this place will never do that; or raising Federal taxes by two-and-a-half times today's level. Either of these options would devastate our economy.

But if we can summon the resolve to begin these difficult conversations now, and make hard choices on the front end, we can change the current course. Abraham Lincoln, one of our greatest Presidents, said "you cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today," yet that is precisely what we are doing in avoiding our responsibility to future generations by passing on a broken system in the form of unfunded Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

That is why next week Senator GEORGE VOINOVICH in the Senate and I in the House will join to introduce identical legislation to establish a national commission that will put everything, everything, entitlement benefits and all other Federal programs, as well as our tax policies, on the table and to require, require Congress to vote up or down on its recommendations in their entirety, similar to the base realignment and base closure commission, BRAC.

This commission would be called the SAFE Commission, to secure America's future economy. We first introduced the SAFE Commission last summer. Since that time, the proposal has received strong support from across the political spectrum, including the Heritage Foundation, the Concord Coalition, former Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle, and former Congressional Budget Office directors. It is being endorsed by major newspapers across the country, including the Dallas Morning News, the Orlando Sentinel and syndicated columnist David Broder.

It is in the hope of building a consensus on this very difficult issue that we will again offer this legislation. One of the most critical responsibilities of the Commission 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 hearings, one in each Federal Reserve district, over the span of 12 months in order to hear directly from the American people.

After its 12-month listening tour, 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.

We 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.

The SAFE Commission will be 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 have the ability to appoint bipartisan co-chairs from among the 10 voting members appointed by Congress.

As a father of five and grandfather of 12, the challenge posed by the pending retirement of baby boomers strikes me as much more than a routine policy discussion. Without action, just what kind of future are we leaving to our children and grandchildren?

I also deeply believe there is a moral component to this issue that goes to the heart of who we are as Americans. By that I mean, I wonder if we have lost the national will to make tough decisions that may require sacrifice?

Moreover, have we lost the political courage to reject the partisan and special interest demands and do what is best for our country?

If we remember the legacy we have inherited—the sacrifices of Washington's crossing and Antietam and so many other examples from the over two centuries of our Nation's history—and the debt we owe to previous generations—our grandparents and our parents and the sacrifices they made to make our country what it is today—I believe we all will be moved to do our duty.

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 enacts significant legislation aimed at addressing this looming crisis, the SAFE Commission would terminate and cease to exist.

The SAFE Commission should be embraced by both sides of the aisle. This is a national

issue; not a Republican issue or a Democrat issue. I am open to suggestions about the legislation from members of both parties. We 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.

We must heed 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."

I look forward to working with my colleagues to enact this legislation.

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

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SOLVING THE INSURANCE CRISIS FACED BY KATRINA VICTIMS

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

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of South Mississippi, I want to thank my fellow Americans for the incredible generosity they have shown the people of south Mississippi in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Literally within hours of that storm, fellow Americans who were National Guardsmen, who were Coast Guardsmen, in the Armed Forces, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force and Marines. They were there helping the people of south Mississippi recover.

Since that time, the people of America dug into their pockets as taxpayers. They dug into their pockets as individuals. They sent Christmas presents, and they donated their time. From school kids to senior citizens, they all came to south Mississippi to help.

It seems like for a while everyone was trying to help south Mississippi, and then the harsh reality was that not everyone really was going to help; that there was actually an element in corporate America that thought they could use this storm as a way to make a lot of money. I am referring to the property and casualty business that insured many of the people in south Mississippi.

Mr. Speaker, almost as soon as the roads were cleared of trees and power lines and dead animals and all the things, we found, unfortunately, in the wake of Katrina, representatives of property and casualty companies were showing up on people's lots, what was left of their homes, and telling them that they had found a reason in the fine print of their policies not to pay.

Even before I made my way back to Congress, and it took about 2 weeks

after the storm for me to get here, they were already working the lobbies, buying steak dinners, buying lobster dinners, buying champagne and telling my colleagues, well, you are going to hear from those people in Mississippi; and, you know, yeah, we denied them, but they are not very smart. They didn't have enough insurance. They built their houses too close to the ground, and they flooded all the time, and that is why we had to tell them no.

So, Mr. Speaker, we need to change that. But before I tell you why we need to change it, before I need to tell you what we need to do, I want to give you a couple of examples.

Remember they said they are not very smart? This was the home of John and Molly Hadden. John has a Master's in business from Tulane University. They said their home was too close to the ground. As you can see, it was about 11 feet off the ground, or 22 feet above sea level. They said they were underinsured. If you had gone down Beach Boulevard in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, a week before Katrina, this is what you would have seen. A beautiful home, less than 10 years old, and built to all the current standards. If you would have gone down that same road, when you could go down that road, a couple weeks after the storm, this is what you would have seen.

John Hadden, being an MBA, a pretty good businessman, knew that to replace this, should something bad happen, would cost a lot of money. He had a \$650,000 insurance policy, to which the folks from State Farm, 16 months later, have given him nothing.

If you had gone a little farther down that street before the storm you would have seen approximately a 130-year-old house owned by Joe and Betty Benvenuti. Joe is himself in the insurance business. This house had been there and survived no telling how many hurricanes, five in my lifetime, and many more prior to that. Joe, being in the insurance industry, knew the importance of being properly covered. So for this beautiful classic historic home, Joe and Betty had \$586,000 worth of insurance. Yet 16 months later, their carrier, State Farm Insurance Company, has paid them nothing, and this is what they found after the storm, by the way: a couple of their kids' trophies, a couple of bricks, maybe a toy or two laying around where the foundation used to be.

Next door to the Benvenuttis we have Mike and Eileen Chapoton. Mike is the head of the trust department of the Whitney Bank, a very, very large regional bank, a job of incredible responsibility. Again, a good businessman who thought he had done all the things you are supposed to do with all the people you are supposed to do it with to protect his home in case something bad should happen. Mike purchased \$236,000 worth of insurance through State Farm, and 16 months after the storm, he has been paid nothing.