

THE SOCIAL SECURITY WIDOWS
AND SPOUSAL PROTECTION ACT

HON. CHELLIE PINGREE

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 2010

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Madam Speaker, I am here today to introduce a bill that addresses a serious problem that affects many retired federal and state employees in Maine and across the nation.

Public servants have performed incredibly important services for their communities and country, but sadly many are being driven into poverty because of the Government Pension Offset, GPO. Of the 5,300 workers in Maine subject to this provision, 3,700 lose all of their Social Security widows or spousal benefits to the GPO. I just don't think that's fair for people who have devoted years to public service.

The effects of the current Government Pension Offset formula are most dramatic on lower income women—79% of beneficiaries affected by the GPO are women. After raising their families and serving the public, these women are devastated by losing most or all of their Social Security benefits after the already overwhelming loss of their spouses to death or divorce.

The legislation I am proposing is targeted at lifting out of poverty those hardest hit by the GPO. It would eliminate the GPO for beneficiaries whose combined monthly pension and Social Security widows or spousal benefits before offset is less than half the maximum Social Security benefit. Others would see a graduated Government Pension Offset. Under this formula, no one would see a reduction in their Social Security benefits and those in the lower incomes would have benefits raised to a livable rate.

I am pleased that the legislation has earned the support of both the Maine Education Association and the Maine State Employees Association. Lorraine Noel, President of the Maine Federation of Chapters for the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association, states, "This legislation is a good first step in addressing the injustices caused by the Government Pension Offset."

Make no mistake, I remain committed to completely repealing the GPO and the Windfall Elimination Provision, and have cosponsored a bill to do so. But in a struggling economy, measures to overturn these offsets are difficult. I hope this incremental reform will alleviate the worst effects on those most damaged by the Government Pension Offset and bring our vulnerable public servants out of poverty.

Please join me in supporting the Social Security Widows and Spousal Protection Act of 2010. We should not have someone's years of public service be the cause of their poverty.

RECOGNIZING NOVACO AND THE
RECIPIENTS OF THE 2010 VOLUNTEER
OF THE YEAR AWARDS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 2010

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor NOVACO and to recognize the recipients of the 2010 Volunteer of the Year Awards.

NOVACO is committed to helping homeless victims of domestic violence become healthy, secure, and self-sufficient. Victims of domestic violence often feel that they have no safe place to turn. Fear, financial uncertainty, and the feeling of isolation often imprison these victims in abusive environments. When a victim breaks free, he or she can too easily end up homeless and alone.

Domestic violence affects every racial, ethnic, and socio-economic group. Many of us know a friend, neighbor, or family member who has been victimized. More than 15 million children in the United States live in families in which partner violence occurred at least once in the past year. Each day, 3 women die as a result of domestic violence. More than 1 in 4 women will be the victim of domestic abuse in her lifetime; more than 3 of 4 Americans know someone who has been victimized.

For more than a decade NOVACO has provided critical services to homeless families who have escaped domestic abuse and who are seeking to rebuild their lives and become self-sufficient. Assistance is provided in many areas including transitional and permanent housing, counseling, childcare, education, job training, and life skills classes. Through the robust support of area businesses and churches, NOVACO has grown into a leader in breaking the cycle of domestic violence.

NOVACO has initiated a number of innovative programs that have resulted in significant advancements for those in need. Their "Good Neighbor" program connects client families with sponsors to assist them in transitioning to self-sufficiency. Through the financial management courses, women have learned how to manage their financial affairs, addressing one of the most daunting aspects of escaping domestic abuse.

NOVACO is strengthened by the dedication of its volunteers. I am honored to recognize the following 2010 Volunteers of the Year: Volunteer of the Year: Joen Schultz Volunteer Group of the Year: Gracing Spaces Volunteer Business of the Year: Brookfield Homes Outstanding Community Support Award: King of Kings Lutheran Church

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing NOVACO, its volunteers and other supporters for their tireless work on behalf of so many who feel stranded and powerless. NOVACO is making a difference in our community, and I pledge to continue working with NOVACO and similar organizations to put an end to domestic abuse.

TRIBUTE TO SPENCER C. DISHER,
JR. M.D.

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 2010

Mr. CLYBURN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding physician and community leader as he retires and enters a new phase of his life. Dr. Spencer Disher of Orangeburg, South Carolina, has served the medical profession and his community admirably for half a century.

Spencer Disher was born in Darlington, South Carolina, and graduated as Salutatorian of his class at Mayo High School. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry from South Carolina State College, now University, and entered Meharry Medical College in Nashville in 1956. Following graduation, he trained for a year at Kate B. Reynolds Hospital and served two years in the U.S. Army. While serving as an Army Captain, Dr. Disher was the Chief Physician for the Pentathlon athletes on the U.S. Olympic Team.

In 1963, Dr. Disher returned to South Carolina and began his medical practice in Orangeburg. He has also served as the college physician at Voorhees College, Denmark Technical College and Claflin University, where he currently serves as Medical Director of Student Health Services. He also holds the position of State Grand Medical Director for the Masons of South Carolina.

In addition to practicing medicine, Dr. Disher has been very involved in organizations that support and advance the profession. He has served as the Chair of the Grants and Proposal Committee of the Board of Trustees of the National Medical Association, and is a member of South Carolina Board of Medical Examiners. He was the Chief of Staff at The Regional Medical Center in Orangeburg. For eleven years, Dr. Disher served as chair of the Executive Board of the Palmetto State Medical Dental Pharmaceutical Association, PMDPA. He also served as president of the PMDPA in 1975. He chaired the Public Health and Consumer Affairs Committee of the National Medical Association, NMA, for over a decade.

Dr. Disher is currently a member of the Meharry Medical College Board of Trustees, and has been a staunch advocate of the school. Two of his sons have graduated from Meharry. He has established the Spencer C. Disher, Jr., M.D. Endowed Scholarship to enable students from South Carolina to pursue their dream of studying for Medical, Dental or a Doctorate Degree in the Biomedical Sciences at Meharry Medical College.

Dr. Disher has been recognized by many organizations including Alpha Phi Alpha and Omega Psi Phi Fraternities. He is a member of the New Mount Zion Baptist Church. In addition to his many professional affiliations, he is a 33rd Degree Mason, a Shriner, and a member of the NAACP. Dr. Disher is married to the former Annette Moorer, and is the father of eight children.

Madam Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in celebrating the wonderful professional contributions of Dr. Spencer Disher. He has distinguished himself as doctor who cares not only for the patient but for the community as a whole. He has been a tremendous leader and a consummate professional throughout his career, and I am proud to call him a friend. I wish him Godspeed in retirement and know that he will continue to play an important part in the Orangeburg community for years to come.

HONORING THE REPUBLIC OF
TURKEY'S 87TH REPUBLIC DAY

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 2010

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, as a co-chair of the Congressional Caucus

on Turkey and Turkish Americans, I would like to offer my warmest congratulations to the people of Turkey, as they recently observed the 87th anniversary of the founding of the Turkish Republic on October 29.

Under the visionary leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his successors, Turkey transformed itself into a modern, secular state allied with the democracies of Europe and the Americas. This alliance is enshrined in Turkey's NATO membership, as evidenced in the logistical and reconstruction efforts Turkey has undertaken in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In light of changing geopolitical developments, there have been questions about Turkey's commitment to its friends in recent years. While there may be bumps in the road in any friendship, differences that may exist between Turkey and the United States on certain issues are evidence of mature and healthy democracies having differences of opinion. The bilateral relationship is still undergirded by the same long-term goals of peace, security and prosperity.

I am confident that the relationship between our two peoples will stand the tests of time, given our shared ideals. Moreover, our ties are cemented by the presence and contributions of over 150,000 Turkish Americans, whose ranks are growing every year. Through diverse fields ranging from music to science—and increasingly through politics—Turkish Americans contribute to the vibrancy, health, and advancement of our society. We are fortunate to have them as our fellow citizens.

In closing, my congratulations again to all Turks everywhere on the commemoration of the 87th Turkish Republic Day.

IN HONOR OF BRIGADIER
GENERAL KENNETH W. NORTH

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 2010

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Brigadier General Kenneth W. North, who passed away on September 21, 2010. Kenneth North fought for his country and survived seven years in a Vietnamese POW camp, and I am honored to stand in tribute to him.

General North was born in 1930 in Rockville, Connecticut, and graduated from the University of Connecticut in 1953. In 1974, he completed studies at the Naval War College at Newport, Rhode Island. In Vietnam, North served as a fighter pilot and flew 33 combat missions before being downed by enemy fire on August 1, 1966.

Kenneth North repeatedly faced down his tormenters during his seven years at the Hanoi Hilton. North was often beaten and tortured; he endured guards jacking his bound arms behind his back until the shoulder joints split. He suffered through these torturous sessions and defied his captors through bouts of solitary confinement.

North, the son of a Vernon mill worker, was released with 100 other POWs in August 1973 and was the first man off the plane on March 7 when he reunited with his family.

General North's military decorations and awards include the Silver Star, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit with oak

leaf cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star Medal with "V" device and two oak leaf clusters, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal, Purple Heart with oak leaf cluster and several unit citations.

North was buried in Wellfleet, Massachusetts. During the ceremony, Air Force fighter jets streaked over Pleasant Hill Cemetery in a final salute. I now ask my colleagues to rise with me so that we too may honor Brigadier General Kenneth North, a true American hero.

HONORING PAUL KELLEY

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 2010

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today with my colleague Congressman MIKE THOMPSON to recognize Paul Kelley who is retiring after 16 years as a member of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors. Congressman THOMPSON and I have the distinct privilege of representing Sonoma County and both of our tenures in the House have coincided with Mr. Kelley's tenure on the Board of Supervisors.

Supervisor Kelley represents the northernmost supervisorial district in Sonoma County, which is home to one of the finest wine grape-growing and wine-producing regions in the world. His support of agriculture and agriculture-related industries is deep seated. He grew up on a small farm outside of Santa Rosa and spent his summers as a youth working on neighboring ranches and farms in the area. As a supervisor, his work included helping to bridge the gap between the water needs of farmers and fisheries, in supporting measures that guaranteed that 22,000 acres in his district would be protected under the county's Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District acquisitions and encouraging businesses and farmers to embrace green technology.

Supervisor Kelley also helped create new parks and recreational facilities throughout his district, including the Boys & Girls Club in Windsor, and renovate existing youth facilities in Cloverdale, Healdsburg and Larkfield-Wikiup.

He was the key proponent of returning commercial air service to the Charles M. Schulz/Sonoma County Airport. The regional airport now has daily flights to four western cities.

Supervisor Kelley's special assignments on the board included membership on the Sonoma County Transportation Authority, the North Coast Rail Authority, the Water Agency Committee, the Local Agency Formation Commission (Chair), the Eel Russian River Commission (Chair), the Redwood Empire Association, the North Coast Air Pollution Control District, the North Coastal Counties Supervisors' Association, the Public Policy Facilitating Committee, the Sonoma County Advertising Program, the Sonoma County Indian Gaming Local Community Benefit Program and the Association of California Water Agencies (President).

Madam Speaker, after 16 years of public service to the people of Sonoma, Paul Kelley deserves to enjoy the riches of this new phase of his life as a water and transportation consultant. We wish him well.

RECOGNIZING ST. AMBROSE CATHOLIC SCHOOL, RECIPIENT OF THE 2010 BLUE RIBBON OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 2010

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize St. Ambrose Catholic School for being named by the United States Department of Education as a recipient of a 2010 Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Award.

The Blue Ribbon School award honors public and private elementary, middle and high schools that have helped close the achievement gap and whose students attain and maintain high academic goals. The program is part of a larger Department of Education effort to identify and disseminate knowledge about best school leadership and teaching practices. Each year since 1982, the U.S. Department of Education has sought out schools where students attain and maintain high academic goals, including those that beat the odds. This year St. Ambrose is one of only 314 schools nationwide, public and private, to receive this award and is the only school in the 11th Congressional District of Virginia to be so honored this year.

Quality education is an important component to our community in Northern Virginia, and it gives me great pride to represent a school as committed and effective at attaining high achievement goals. St. Ambrose is committed to teaching faith and life skills to students from kindergarten through 8th grade. Through rigorous academic programs, robust activities, excellent staff, and a committed community, St. Ambrose exemplifies the strong fabric of our shared community here in Northern Virginia.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing and congratulating Principal Barbara Dalmut, her staff, and the St. Ambrose Catholic school community for their efforts toward earning this prestigious award.

TRIBUTE TO CAROLYN E.
DALLINGER

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 18, 2010

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Carolyn E. Dallinger of Huxley, Iowa, as the recipient of the 2010 Iowa Professor of the Year award. She was honored at a reception in Washington, D.C., on November 18.

The U.S. Professors of the Year program, which is sponsored by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, is the only national program to recognize excellence in undergraduate teaching and mentoring.

Carolyn is currently an Assistant Professor of Social Work and Criminal Justice at Simpson College. She enjoys incorporating service learning components within her classroom teaching whenever possible. An example of