

The Seniors Protection Act is critical to our seniors, and is fiscally responsible. Unfortunately, Congressional Republicans oppose the bill, something that is truly regrettable and a moral outrage.

While Democrats maintain a strong record protecting, upholding, and strengthening Social Security, Republicans continue to advocate risky schemes to privatize it and cut benefits. America's seniors deserve better.

I commend all of my colleagues who support this bill, and I thank Social Security Subcommittee Chairman EARL POMEROY for his outstanding leadership on this issue. Democrats will always stand with our Nation's seniors, because it is the humane, just, and right thing to do.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 5987, the Seniors Protection Act of 2010.

Earlier this year, the Social Security Administration announced that for the second year in a row, Social Security beneficiaries would not be receiving a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increase for the second year in a row. This legislation provides seniors with an additional \$250 payment, equivalent to about a 2% COLA, to Social Security beneficiaries next year.

A COLA increase is imperative for seniors who rely on their benefits to support themselves and their families. According to the Economic Policy Institute, 3.5 million seniors are below the poverty level. The Department of Labor estimates that almost half of the 2 million workers over the age of 55 have been unemployed for six months or longer. Yet as more seniors experience poverty as a result of the economic downturn, the calls for privatizing and cutting Social Security in the name of fiscal responsibility have grown louder. Privatizing Social Security will hurt the most vulnerable Americans such as women, minority communities and children—those Americans that are currently experiencing disproportionately the effects of the recession. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the program is fiscally sound for another 40 plus years.

It is our responsibility to guarantee seniors an adequate income after a lifetime of paying into Social Security. We must shift the focus from cutting vital programs such as Social Security to reviving our domestic manufacturing sector as a means to put Americans back to work.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 5987, "Supporting the Seniors Protection Act of 2010." Let me begin by thanking my colleague Representative EARL POMEROY for introducing this very important legislation into the House of Representatives as it is important that we recognize the struggle that a certain segment of our Nation endures and support them by ensuring that we give attention to this matter.

As you may know, H.R. 5987, directs the Secretary of the Treasury to disburse a \$250 payment to recipients of Social Security, SSI (Supplemental Security Income under title XVI of the Social Security Act), railroad retirement benefits, and veterans disability compensation or pension benefits if no cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) is payable in 2011.

I support the Seniors Protection Act of 2010. This Act will provide immediate relief to sen-

iors struggling on fixed income with increasing expenses. The legislation will provide 54 million Social Security beneficiaries and others with a one-time \$250 payment, in lieu of a COLA. Now more than ever this emergency spending of \$14.5 billion would provide targeted economic relief to our most vulnerable citizens living on fixed incomes, and struggling with rising health care, food and utility costs.

For many, social security checks are the primary source of income and for others, social security checks are the only source of income. It is both fair and appropriate to now provide a second payment to help stimulate our Nation's economy and at the same time assist seniors, people with disabilities, children and other Social Security beneficiaries who did not receive a cost of living adjustment in 2010 and will not get one again in 2011. The Bureau of Labor Statistics has determined that the cost of medical care services has risen by nearly seven percent in just the last two years. This \$250 payment would represent a small step toward reversing the erosion in benefits caused by the skyrocketing cost of health care.

Therefore, I am requesting that we, the Congress urge President Obama to include a \$500 payment for seniors in his Budget Request for next year. This \$500 payment represents an inclusion for the lack of COLA in 2010 and 2011 years. While I understand that this will not totally eradicate the financial strain, I believe this allotment will serve to ameliorate some financial hardships. It is important that Congress guarantees resources to our seniors that will assist them in not only surviving, but also thriving.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support H.R. 5987 and ask for its immediate adoption.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5987, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER PROTECTION ACT OF 2010

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 3789) to limit access to social security account numbers.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 3789

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Social Security Number Protection Act of 2010".

SEC. 2. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER PROTECTION.

(a) PROHIBITION OF USE OF SOCIAL SECURITY ACCOUNT NUMBERS ON CHECKS ISSUED FOR PAYMENT BY GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 205(c)(2)(C) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 405(c)(2)(C)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(x) No Federal, State, or local agency may display the Social Security account number of any individual, or any derivative of such number, on any check issued for any payment by the Federal, State, or local agency."

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this subsection shall apply with respect to checks issued after the date that is 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) PROHIBITION OF INMATE ACCESS TO SOCIAL SECURITY ACCOUNT NUMBERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 205(c)(2)(C) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 405(c)(2)(C)) (as amended by subsection (a)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(xi) No Federal, State, or local agency may employ, or enter into a contract for the use or employment of, prisoners in any capacity that would allow such prisoners access to the Social Security account numbers of other individuals. For purposes of this clause, the term 'prisoner' means an individual confined in a jail, prison, or other penal institution or correctional facility pursuant to such individual's conviction of a criminal offense."

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this subsection shall apply with respect to employment of prisoners, or entry into contract with prisoners, after the date that is 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SAM JOHNSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Dakota.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, I introduced a bill with my friend, the ranking member on the Social Security Subcommittee, SAM JOHNSON, to protect the accuracy of Social Security records and help shield individuals from identity theft. Our bill prohibited Federal, State, and local governments from employing prisoners in any capacity that would allow inmates access to the full or partial Social Security numbers of other individuals, such as through prison labor contracts. The bipartisan Senate bill before us today does the same thing and also prohibits Federal, State, and local governments from displaying Social Security numbers on paper checks, which will also help protect the Social Security program and protect fraud. Both are obvious changes that would protect millions of Americans from identity theft.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I concur with all that's been said so far.

You know, Americans worry about the security of their personal information, including their Social Security number, and I don't blame them. Even though Social Security numbers were

created to track wages for determining Social Security benefits, these numbers are widely used as personal identifiers. In fact, in their April, 2007 report, the President's Identity Task Force identified the Social Security number as the "most valuable commodity for an identity thief." And these thieves are working overtime. Identity theft is the fastest growing fraud in America—last year there were over 11 million victims.

The Federal Trade Commission says identity theft costs consumers about \$50 billion per year. Today, we are taking a step forward—albeit a small step—to protect Social Security numbers by preventing prisoner access to these numbers and prohibiting Social Security numbers from appearing on government checks.

Believe it or not, the Social Security Inspector General found that eight States currently allow prisoners to work on jobs that give them access to Social Security numbers. With today's vote we will be one step closer to putting an end to that practice.

I am glad to report that over the years the Ways and Means Committee has been working on a bipartisan basis to stem the tide of identity theft through restricting the sale, use, and public display of Social Security numbers, and I thank my colleague for that.

Most recently, these provisions are part of the Social Security Number Privacy and Identify Theft Prevention Act introduced in this Congress by then Subcommittee Chairman JOHN TANNER and myself. I was also pleased to join Chairman POMEROY when he introduced H.R. 5854, the No Prisoner Access to Social Security Numbers Act of 2010. This is a great bill. I urge my colleagues to support this important first step by voting "yes."

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Houston, Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN).

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Let me first say I want to thank my colleague for bringing both these bills up, H.R. 5987 and also S. 3789.

First let me talk about Congressman POMEROY. He and I came to the Congress together in 1993, and we worked together on a lot of issues, he coming from a very rural area. But we found out about 3 or 4 years ago that—and you can tell my Texas accent—his State has grown dramatically in the production of natural gas and oil, and also they have a refinery in North Dakota. I have five refineries, but I'm glad they have one up in his State.

We have worked together for the last few years on energy issues for our country, and I want to thank him for his service to our country. EARL, we will miss you. And I will miss your friendship and your leadership on the Ways and Means Committee.

I am proud to be here today to support not only S. 3789, the Social Security Number Protection Act, but also H.R. 5987, the Seniors Protection Act of 2010. For the second year in a row our Nation's seniors and veterans and people with disabilities have been denied a cost of living adjustment, their COLA. The Seniors Protection Act would provide 54 million Social Security beneficiaries with a one-time \$250 payment in lieu of a COLA.

This bill would provide targeted economic relief for our Nation's most vulnerable citizens. I have seniors in our district who get Social Security, they're married, and some of them are in terrible shape because of their circumstances—I have one who, her husband is disabled, she takes care of him, but because of a family situation she is taking care of three of her grandchildren. This is the second year she would not get any assistance or any increase in her Social Security. That is why this bill is so important.

Almost two out of three seniors and 70 percent of people with disabilities rely on Social Security for half or more of their income. One-third of seniors get more than 90 percent of their income from Social Security. It's important that our Nation continue the promise that Americans should be allowed to retire with dignity, which has lasted for 75 years.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman 1 additional minute.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Thank you. And I just urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 5987, but also for S. 3789.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO).

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Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman for the time and thank him for his leadership on both the issues before us regarding Social Security.

The protection of our Social Security numbers is vital. I once had a reporter come to my office and say, I have something to show you. She pulled out a piece of paper, and she said, Here's your Social Security number. I bought it for \$15 online. That should not be allowed. That should be an illegal activity in this country.

But the other issue that just preceded this is equally important to 40 million people who collect Social Security and a number of people who collect veterans benefits, and that is a meaningful and well-deserved cost-of-living adjustment for real increases in the costs of living for seniors in America.

Now, yeah, the pointy heads down at the Department of Labor have this jiggered up kind of cost-of-living index which puts heavy weight on buying a 4G iPhone and the reductions in costs, and second generation or third genera-

tion of expensive computers and things like that. But it doesn't go to basics. It doesn't go to the cost of pharmaceuticals, which unfortunately many seniors have to consume to maintain their health. It doesn't go to the cost of, you know, hospital care or physicians visits. It doesn't go meaningfully to basics, like utility costs or rent or taxes on your property. None of those things are given heavy weight or any weight, in some cases, in the cost-of-living index that they are using to say to seniors, Your costs didn't go up last year, so you'll get no cost-of-living adjustment.

I have introduced legislation over a number of years to have a specific cost-of-living index for seniors called a CPI-E, elderly, because they consume from a different so-called market basket than do young consumers in this country. You'd get laughed out of the room if you went to any senior center in this country or any coffee klatch in some little coffee shop in your district with retirees and said, Hey, your costs didn't go up this last year. You don't need a cost-of-living adjustment on Social Security. Give me a break. Seniors need a cost-of-living adjustment, and we need to protect our Social Security numbers.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we are digressing from the business at hand to something that has already happened. He needs to know that the people out there do understand the cost-of-living adjustment. It is fixed under Social Security rules, and they don't need it this year.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation. It is good for America.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, by way of close, let me say that the legislation before us is important and reflects what has been a pattern of bipartisan work between the ranking member and myself as I have chaired the Social Security Subcommittee. I have enjoyed working with Sam Johnson. It is a pretty thrilling thing for a kid from North Dakota to get to work with an American hero, and I have appreciated his conscientious service as ranking member of the Social Security Subcommittee.

I also, to colleagues, have deeply appreciated the opportunity to chair the committee. I received a Social Security check in my own life when my dad died as I was a teenager. To have the opportunity to chair the subcommittee, protecting the United States' most important domestic program, Social Security, was a deep honor and a responsibility that I'll always treasure, having had that chance.

I want to thank the staff members who helped throughout, keeping this subcommittee superbly supported with the important policy work before it. Kathryn Olson, Joel Najjar, Morna Miller, Jennifer Beeler on the majority. We have certainly appreciated working with Kim Hildreth on the minority. It has been a terrific experience.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 3789, the bill now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Dakota?

There was no objection.

Mr. POMEROY. I encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. POMEROY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 3789.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING EFFORTS OF WELCOME BACK VETERANS

Mr. DONNELLY of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1746) recognizing and supporting the efforts of Welcome Back Veterans to augment the services provided by the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs in providing timely and world-class care for veterans and members of the Armed Forces suffering from PTSD and related psychiatric disorders, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1746

Whereas the Boston Red Sox Foundation has been augmenting the Departments of Defense and Veterans' Affairs in providing care for veterans and members of the Armed Forces suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and related psychiatric disorders;

Whereas members of all components of the United States Armed Forces have been serving honorably in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001;

Whereas deployed soldiers frequently and continually engage in high-intensity combat operations, exposing them to potential triggers for PTSD or other psychiatric conditions;

Whereas the prevalence of clinically diagnosed cases of PTSD in veterans who have served in Iraq or Afghanistan ranges from 1.5 to 9 percent, depending on exposure risk factors, and the prevalence of PTSD symptoms in such veterans, based on self-reported surveys, ranges from 4.2 to 26 percent depending on exposure risk factors;

Whereas those with PTSD are at higher risk for developing other psychological disorders, such as depression, more likely to engage in self-destructive behaviors, such as alcohol and substance abuse;

Whereas PTSD has been associated with unemployment and a work productivity loss;

Whereas PTSD, left untreated, may exact an additional toll on individuals, families, and society;

Whereas veterans and active members of the United States Armed Forces are a distin-

guished and honored part of our society and deserve special recognition and treatment for their sacrifices on our behalf;

Whereas the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives encourages and actively seeks innovative treatments for PTSD and traumatic brain injury (TBI);

Whereas Major League Baseball, in partnership with the McCormick Foundation, the Entertainment Industry Foundation, and University Hospitals at Weill Cornell, the University of Michigan and Stanford University have founded Welcome Back Veterans, a not-for-profit organization committed to creating a national network of centers to provide the best care to veterans, and funding groundbreaking research to limit the scope of PTSD;

Whereas the Boston Red Sox Foundation independently founded a program to provide PTSD treatment for veterans in conjunction with Massachusetts General Hospital;

Whereas Welcome Back Veterans through Major League Baseball Charities and the Boston Red Sox Foundation have funded efforts at four hospitals and universities—Massachusetts General in Boston, Weill Cornell in New York, the University of Michigan, and Stanford University in California;

Whereas Major League Baseball and the Boston Red Sox Foundation have already raised \$15,000,000 in private funding to support treatment, research, and innovation in PTSD care through grants to other service organizations;

Whereas the University of Michigan has already begun treatment of hundreds of members of the Armed Forces and veterans in a new buddy-to-buddy program;

Whereas Massachusetts General is providing evaluations and treatment to local veterans with PTSD and TBI, family counseling, and outreach for family members of veterans affected by these two conditions;

Whereas Massachusetts General, Weill Cornell, and Stanford University are doing ongoing research to improve treatments and community education of health workers, clergy, social workers, human resource providers, and others;

Whereas the Department of Veterans Affairs provides some counseling services to family members of those suffering from PTSD;

Whereas the University of Michigan and Massachusetts General are providing counseling and related services to family members of those suffering from PTSD;

Whereas 5,000 veterans and members of the Armed Forces are already receiving help through the Welcome Back Veterans program; and

Whereas Welcome Back Veterans is committed to a public-private partnership with appropriate government agencies to continue to expand their work and outreach: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes and supports the efforts of Welcome Back Veterans to augment the services provided by the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs in providing timely and world-class care for veterans and members of the Armed Forces suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and related psychiatric disorders; and

(2) encourages the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish innovative public-private partnerships for the treatment and research of post-traumatic stress disorder in teaching hospitals across the country.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) and the gen-

tleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DONNELLY of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on House Resolution 1746, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Indiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. DONNELLY of Indiana. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, before I talk about the importance of the resolution before us today, I want to thank the Committee on Armed Services for working with us to bring this resolution to the floor and would ask that the exchange of letters waiving jurisdiction between the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Armed Services be inserted into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Mr. Speaker, we are all aware that post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD, is one of the signature wounds of Operation New Dawn and Operation Enduring Freedom. Countless reports and studies bear out this statement. Most significantly, a 2008 study released by the RAND Corporation reported that one in five veterans of the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan are suffering from PTSD. Studies by other experts and by the VA itself demonstrate how widespread and serious PTSD is; and as more servicemembers return home, the problem will only grow larger.

VA has made important strides in the treatment of PTSD. They boast providers throughout the Nation who offer excellent care for PTSD and researchers who have found innovative, ground-breaking new treatments as well. But VA cannot combat PTSD alone. Dedicated advocates and organizations throughout the country are committed to doing their part to help provide care for our veterans.

Welcome Back Veterans has answered this call to service. The partnership between Major League Baseball, the McCormick Foundation, the Entertainment Industry Foundation and the university hospitals at Weill Cornell, the University of Michigan, Stanford University, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have already made tremendous accomplishments on behalf of our veterans.

They have raised over \$15 million for PTSD treatment and research and are working closely with hospitals in Massachusetts, New York, Michigan, and California to help provide care to over 5,000 servicemembers. But for all the great things that Welcome Back Veterans has accomplished, I know they are poised to do so much more. They are continuing to work hard to care for our veterans, and I look forward to watching them continue with these efforts.