

healthier longer. A lot of people are trying to keep working longer. I think more and more of the companies and employers want that experience, want the experienced people to stay longer. So it is part of our actuarial adjustment that we should be making.

Over the next 25 years, we would be going into the long-term adjustments that are necessary. If we look, say, out until 2085, we will take \$7.2 trillion off the Social Security requirements. So now you are talking about fiscal responsibility looking at both sides of our spending equation, mandatory as well as discretionary, which gives us a real chance to make a difference and to say this Congress, hopefully working with this President, because it has to be bipartisan—we cannot pass a bill the President will not sign.

The Democrats are in the majority in the Senate. Republicans are in the majority in the House. So this is going to take some compromising. The Republicans do not control the Senate, and the Democrats do not control the House. And the Republicans do not control the White House. So it is not as though we are able to say: My way or the highway. You cannot do it, and neither can the President. So we have got to come together if we are going to make the very tough choices that will get our fiscal house in order for future retirees to have the cushion that Social Security would be—it is supposed to be a safety net—to talk another day. But we need a better retirement option for our retirees as well, so they can save more in IRAs. Because Social Security is not supposed to be a pension plan. It is a safety net. It is a supplement. So if we can solve this, the next thing we ought to be doing is adding more options for people to save. We have done some of that with the bill I sponsored with Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, the Democrat from Maryland, with spousal IRAs.

We have increased the amount you can save and that a stay-at-home spouse can save, and we have made some major good moves in the right direction. But that is different from what we are talking about today, which is Social Security.

I have written a letter to the Vice President. I have asked him to put Social Security on the agenda, because when we finish all of these discussions, they are going to come back with cuts in discretionary spending, but it cannot be enough when it is less than 40 percent of our spending. We have to look at entitlements if we are going to be responsible.

Since I have filed my bill last week, and have had the opportunity with the Heritage Foundation and the media to talk about my plan, we are getting some good support. Of course, we are getting the people who say: No cuts, no way, no how. We expect that. But it is burying your head in the sand if you say: No way, no how.

So we are getting some support. The founder of the Association of Mature

American Citizens, Dan Weber, who on their Web site says they now have 160,000 members—the fastest growing organization for older Americans in our country—has stated his support for my proposal. They see changes have to be made. They have even gone a step further and talked about private accounts, which I certainly support, but it is not in my plan.

I appreciate the Association of Mature American Citizens being willing to do what is right for their constituents, their retirees, but also for the long-term, to say we know that if we are going to have a responsible approach, entitlements must be on the table. And Social Security is one that we can do, if it is bipartisan, together.

My plan will address the issue now, with no tax increases and no cuts in core benefits. It will have the gradual rise in the retirement age, affecting no one before the year 2016 and after that just 3 months a year in added age to be eligible for Social Security. The cost-of-living adjustment would be adjusted 1 percent down, and after 1 percent inflation, then you would have the cost-of-living adjustment as well but no cuts in core benefits. The amendments of the past—in 1983—the amendments that have put us back on track with actuarial tables in the past can be done again.

It is my great hope that we can step up to the plate, as those who came before us did, and do the right thing for the long term and burst the bubble that we can reform spending only addressing the discretionary side. It is a myth. Anyone who tells you with a straight face “I am not going to look at the entitlements” is not being a responsible steward of our problem. That is what we were elected to do, and I hope we can put together a bipartisan coalition, working with the President, to do it.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the Association of Mature American Citizens article by Dan Weber.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Wall Street Journal, June 20, 2011]

WHILE AARP WAFFLES AMAC PROPOSES
CHANGE IN SOCIAL SECURITY

(By Daniel C. Weber)

According to the Wall Street Journal AARP has decided to accept some changes in Social Security to assure that it will continue to be financially stable. However as soon as the story came out and was broadly circulated its C.E.O., A. Barry Rand issued a statement saying AARP has not changed its position on being against changes in Social Security.

But, Mr. Rand in his statement said their position is “that any changes would be phased in slowly, over time and would not affect any current or near term beneficiaries”.

In response, Dan Weber, president of AMAC, the Association of Mature American Citizens, said “that sure sounds like he is in favor of making changes to me”.

AMAC, which bills itself as the conservative alternative to AARP is the fastest

growing organization for older Americans according to Weber.

“We have over 160,000 paid members and are growing stronger each day,” Weber said, “And while AARP is waffling AMAC has proposed serious changes in Social Security that will stabilize Social Security and allow people to have more money when they are retired than the present system.”

Weber explained the AMAC proposal was to incorporate the change recommended by Texas Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison and others, to raise the age when a recipient would receive their full benefit from age 66 to age 69. The new age would start to be implemented in 2013 and won't be fully phased in until 2018.

The key difference between their suggested changes and ours is that we would also incorporate the mandatory offering of a new “Social Security IRA” to anyone who would be affected by the change in age. The SS IRA would be tax deductible, payroll deducted and put into an individual IRA owned by the wage earner. The funds invested would not be accessible until either age 62 or Security 65. It could be started with as little as \$5 per week and be put into a plan offered by the same companies that presently offer IRAs and 401ks.

Fifty percent or more of the funds would have to be invested in guaranteed interest accounts so the person would be guaranteed to have gains in at least half of their funds.

Weber said “It is unfair to force Americans to continue to work until age 69, especially those who work in occupations that require physical labor. People who are farmers, construction workers, laborers, skilled tradesmen such as carpenters, plumbers, electricians, masons and other workers have punished their bodies after years of labor suffer from various ailments that white collar workers generally avoid.

They should be able to stop working at a lower age and the SS IRA would allow anyone to do that.

At the same time, extending the full age to 69 would make Social Security stable for many years in the future. Weber ended by saying “It is time for the political leaders of both parties to have courage, and stand up to solve this problem by adopting the AMAC plan.”

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

EXTENSION OF MORNING
BUSINESS

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 12:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I am going to put in a quorum call at this moment, but then I am going to ask to be given time to speak on a dire emergency facing my State.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to use such time as I might consume.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NORTH DAKOTA FLOODING

Mr. CONRAD. Madam President, the city of Minot, ND, in my home state, is facing a dire emergency. Minot and other communities on the Souris River in my home State are facing a flood of epic proportion. We have a wall of water heading toward the city. I am told the sirens have just sounded in that town alerting people to evacuate.

This is the headline this morning from that town's major newspaper. The headline reads: "Projection: Devastation. Minot residents evacuate as historic rise in the Souris River approaches."

This flood is a result of overly wet conditions for an extended period of time, a record snowmelt, combined with record rainfall in the basin above the city. We are now told that perhaps a third of the city will be underwater, and unprecedented rains have filled upstream reservoirs to capacity, leading to a dramatic change in the forecast in 48 hours.

On Saturday, we were told we could expect the river level to reach elevation 1,555 feet in the city. On Monday, we were told 1,566 feet—an 11-foot increase in 48 hours. The result is the defenses that have been built up over an extended period of time, that gave us about 3 feet of freeboard, are absolutely incapable of dealing with a flood of this magnitude and a rise happening this rapidly.

This is the headline from yesterday in the Minot Daily News, which kind of summed it all up: "It's a sad day." Crest could be 10 feet higher than June 1."

It is staggering to understand what is happening here. There are four reservoirs above the city of Minot, all of them filled to capacity. In fact, we have been told the floodgates of the major reservoir in Canada are wide open. They cannot control the flow of water. Whatever comes in is going out because they have lost the ability to meter out the water more slowly.

This is what we are seeing happen all over Minot as crews rush in to try and provide secondary defenses, to protect as much of the city's critical infrastructure as possible—schools, water treatment facilities, other critical infrastructure—that is going to be necessary to be able to continue to fight this flood menace.

This was the headline in the Bismarck Tribune: "Crisis to the North. Souris Floods Force 11,000 Residents From Minot." It is a town of 40,000. So when you have 11,000 people forced to flee, that has a devastating impact.

This is the headline, again, from the Minot Daily News of June 20, on Monday: "Water Woes Continue. People in

danger zones advised to be prepared to evacuate." And as I have said, that evacuation is occurring as I speak.

The Fargo Forum, which is the biggest newspaper in our State, had this headline: "11,000 Forced Out. Rising Souris moves up evacuation time. Residents in heart of city work fast to save what they can."

My own cousin and her family have a home that is in danger. They have moved everything from the basement to the first floor. Now they say they will have 7 feet of water on the first floor of their house. This is happening to people throughout the Minot community.

These pictures that ran in the newspapers tell the story in a powerful and clear way. What we have is somebody trying to go into a neighborhood. You can see there is a police vehicle, because they are under mandatory evacuation. This person tried to get over to perhaps rescue a pet or take care of some last-minute business; maybe turn off the gas. And there he is, stuck in the water, as these floodwaters rise, and rise very rapidly.

This picture also gives a perspective on what we are confronting. Here is the dike, levee, that has just been raised, and you can see there is maybe 2 or 3 feet of freeboard there. But what is coming is 10 more feet of water, so there is absolutely no way these dikes can possibly hold. There is no way they can protect the city. These dikes are going to overtop, and thousands of residents will be displaced.

This picture shows another shot. In this place, they didn't have the dikes covered by plastic. You can see a couple of feet of freeboard there. All these houses are at risk as this wall of water comes our way.

This is another shot showing a house, and you can see they have the main dike and they have also built a secondary dike to protect their home. All these efforts will prove to be for naught because of this unprecedented wall of water. In fact, this is five feet higher than in all of recorded history. That is what is happening to this community of Minot, ND—home to 40,000 people, home to one of the major Air Force bases of the United States, home of the Minuteman missiles, and home of the B-52 bombers. Minot, ND, the fourth largest city in my State, is about to experience the greatest devastation in the history of the town—a flood worse than the 1969 flood by many feet, and that flood was a modern-day record to that point, the 1969 flood.

This chart shows the evacuation zones. This gives you some sense of how major the relocation of people is out of this city. These are the evacuation zones 1 through 8 that go right on the edge of the river, and you can see all of these people under mandatory evacuation.

They are going to have to leave, and they are going to have to leave very quickly.

Madam President, I would like to end as I began, by showing the headline this morning in the Minot Daily News. "Projection: Devastation."

There is no way around it. There is absolutely no way to respond when the flood forecast changes this rapidly and the water is coming this quickly. The result is these people are going to face high water not for just a day or two. Typically in a flood, the water comes and the water goes. In this circumstance, the water is coming and it is not leaving anytime soon. They have told us as recently as yesterday that we could expect high water until the middle of July. Can you imagine, to have your house under water from late June to the middle of July, the devastation that will result.

So this headline, "Projection: Devastation," says it very well. That is what we are faced with in this community.

The bottom line is, we are going to need help. And we are certainly getting it. We deeply appreciate the efforts of the Corps of Engineers, FEMA, and all of the other Federal agencies that are helping. The National Guard, certainly hundreds of troops there are doing a fantastic job of patrolling these dikes, of helping people move, of making certain that people get out of harm's way because job number 1 is protecting people's lives. We also have an obligation to do everything we can to protect as much of the property as is humanly possible. We very much appreciate the assistance the Red Cross is giving.

I just met with General Kowalski of the U.S. Air Force, a three-star general who has as part of his command the Minot Air Force Base. I called the Secretary of the Air Force yesterday and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force the day before and asked them to be alert to the need for that base to help us because there is so much they can provide in assistance, being out of harm's way. The base is 12 miles north of the town.

General Kowalski came to me this morning to deliver the message that the U.S. Air Force is prepared to help in every way possible. We deeply appreciate that commitment and that support. We remember very well in 1997, when we had record floods in Grand Forks, ND—that is home to one of the other major Air Force bases of the United States—the extraordinary support and help they provided to us at that time.

The final board I will show is the headline from the Minot Daily News of June 21: "It's a sad day." It is indeed a sad day. But the people of North Dakota are tough, they are resilient, and they are going to come back. I have every confidence that we will rebuild this town. It will be a tough slog, but the people of North Dakota are equal to it, and we deeply appreciate the help we are getting from people all across America.

I have seen America at its best in a time of crisis. When people are down,