

SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY TRUST FUND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. REED) for 5 minutes.

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of important issues before the House this week, but I wanted to take an opportunity to raise an issue that we have been working on in our office for quite some time.

We, as a body, Mr. Speaker, will be faced with an opportunity, hopefully, to resolve this issue here shortly in the next few months, and that is the issue of the Social Security disability insurance trust fund.

Not a lot of people are aware—and I just read the Social Security trustees report over the summer—that the disability trust fund goes insolvent in 2016. That means millions of Americans who rely on Social Security disability benefits are looking at a situation where their benefits are going to be cut 20 percent because of the insolvency of the Social Security trust fund—2016, Mr. Speaker, that is right around the corner.

When I raised this issue 2 years ago with the White House, with Jack Lew—our Treasury Secretary—in our Committee on Ways and Means hearing, I asked him 2 years ago: What is the plan? What is the solution to this problem?

What I was ultimately told was this is what we are going to do: we are just going to take money from the Social Security retirement fund and move it over to the disability trust fund and bail it out.

Well, in my private life in business, I knew a lot of businessowners, and what that essentially was, it is robbing Peter to pay Paul because the Social Security retirement fund is on a path to insolvency just a few short years down the road.

I said we could do better. That is why I was glad to join with my colleague, SAM JOHNSON, who chairs the Subcommittee on Social Security here in Washington, to change the rules to make sure that that solution would not be the one that we follow here in 2015 and 2016. We can do better.

You know why we can do better? It is because we care. We care about the people that are in the disability trust fund, and we need to listen to those people. This is what their experience is with the disability trust fund today. They are frustrated. It is a bureaucracy. It is a mess.

We have overpayments. We have fraudulent payments. We have a system that penalizes people returning to work, rather than trying to incentivize them and stand with them when they return to work.

We had an individual by the name of Mike Zelly come before the committee and testify to us, and he is in the disability trust fund. He was in a horrific automobile accident 36 years ago and has been in a wheelchair ever since.

These are the people we should listen to. These are the people that know the

disability trust fund the best. What his testimony to us was, he says we should seize this opportunity to fix this problem, take care of the bureaucracy, make sure the overpayments don't occur because, when an overpayment occurs to a disability recipient, guess who has to pay it back? It is the disability recipient because of the Social Security Administration's incompetence. That is not right. That is not fair.

Most importantly, what he talked about in his 36 years in the disability trust fund is that, when he tried to return to work, he was faced with obstacle after obstacle of a bureaucracy that said, if you do that, you will lose your benefit. That is not right.

Mike Zelly offered ideas on how we can improve the system to streamline this bureaucracy. This is the process someone in the Social Security disability trust fund has to go through in order to try to go back to work. We need to simplify it, and we need to stand with the American work ethic for the people in the disability trust fund that want to return to work.

There was a recent Brookings Institution report that came across my desk that I read. There was 40 percent return on the beneficiaries in the disability trust fund that indicated they would like to return to work, but because of the bureaucracy, there was fear. There was a sense that, if they did that, they would lose their benefit, and they just couldn't risk it.

That is why we are offering common-sense reforms here out of our office, out of the Committee on Ways and Means, out of this House, hopefully, shortly, so that what we can do is make sure that those disability trust fund recipients don't look at a 20 percent cut in 2016.

We will hold them harmless, and we will make sure we do what is necessary in order to make sure that our obligations and promises under the disability trust fund are met to those individuals because that is the right thing to do.

We cannot lose this opportunity to modernize the Social Security disability trust fund to make sure that we stand with those that want to return to work and believe in the American work ethic like we do.

I ask my colleagues to join with us on a bipartisan basis, and there has been an indication of bipartisan work that we have been able to show here in the initial conversations.

Let's modernize the disability trust fund; let's cure the waste, fraud, and abuse, but most importantly, let's stand with the individuals like Mike Zelly who want to return to work because it gives him dignity and it gives him a sense that he is contributing rather than being in any way a burden on the system.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair

declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 6 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Robert Michaels, Serve & Protect, Brentwood, Tennessee, offered the following prayer:

Lord God, we humbly come before You asking for wisdom, unity, and peace.

We are reminded that September 9, 1776, the Continental Congress declared the name of our new Nation to be the United States of America, no longer United Colonies. Our national unity was strong.

Lord, we also remember unity September 11, 2001, when terrorists attacked our Nation. Again, our Nation stood united, strong, and resolute.

Today, Lord, we pray for that same commitment to unity, that sense of all for one and one for all. We pray for our military and first responders, noble heroes all.

Please, Lord, help our leaders. Grant wisdom and vision; help them serve this great Nation, under God, "with liberty and justice for all." One Nation. One heart. One mind.

We sincerely pray this as one Nation under God, as Jesus taught us to pray, to our Father, who is in heaven.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. MCCOLLUM led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING REVEREND ROBERT MICHAELS

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, it is a distinct honor to introduce and honor guest chaplain Reverend Robert Michaels, from Brentwood, Tennessee.

As is the tradition of this governing body, we begin each day with a prayer. I am so pleased that Chaplain Michaels is offering that prayer today.

He is the CEO, founder, and national trauma care specialist for Serve & Protect, an international nonprofit organization dedicated to comprehensive and confidential trauma care and therapy for police officers, firefighters, rescue workers, dispatchers, and other emergency workers.

Chaplain Michaels served in law enforcement with the 229th Military Police Battalion of the Virginia Army National Guard, as well as with the Norfolk, Virginia, police department.

He serves as chaplain for the FBI Memphis division, Nashville R.A., State chaplain for Tennessee FOP, and is a chaplain and second vice president for Morris Heithcock FOP Lodge 41 in Williamson County, Tennessee, where he is an active member and leads a Bible study group for first responders.

He is a member of the American Academy of Experts in Trauma Stress, National Center for Crisis Management, the International Conference of Police Chaplains, and Federation of Fire Chaplains. He holds a BA from Columbia International University and an MA from Wheaton College.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in welcoming Chaplain Michaels today and expressing gratitude for the good work that he does for our law enforcement and emergency workers each and every day.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WENSTRUP). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

CONGRATULATING THE ROWAN LITTLE LEAGUE SOFTBALL TEAM

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to recognize the members of Rowan Little League's 12-under softball team.

Kaylin Dowling, Allison Ennis, Kary Hales, Caylie Keller, Caitlin Mann, Kali Morton, Taylor Sanborn, Megyn Spicer, Liza Simmerson, Jaden Vaughn, Taylor Walton, Ellie Wilhelm, and Ellen Yang played their hearts out during the Little League Softball World Series in Portland, Oregon, and emerged as world champions.

Coach Steve Yang, with assistance from Coaches Eric Dowling and Rob Hales, led the team, who went 5-1 in the tournament and outscored their opponents 43-6 during the winning campaign.

After scoring four runs in the first inning of the championship game versus East regional champs, Rhode Island, the team relied on exceptional pitching and outstanding defensive play to win the game.

I commend these young athletes and congratulate them on a job well done. North Carolina is incredibly proud of the teamwork, dedication, and perseverance they exhibited on the way to this extraordinary achievement.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF SHANE CLIFTON

(Ms. MCCOLLUM asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I attended a visitation for St. Paul firefighter and paramedic Shane Clifton. Mr. Clifton passed away while on duty at Fire Station 14 in St. Paul, Minnesota.

In addition to his duties as firefighter and paramedic, Shane served in Afghanistan and Iraq as a member of the United States Navy and participated in humanitarian missions in Haiti.

Shane and firefighters around Minnesota and our Nation sacrifice time away from their families, work long hours, and put their lives at risk to keep our communities safe. We owe all of our first responders an incredible debt of gratitude for ensuring our public safety.

Shane served the city of St. Paul bravely and his death is a tragedy. The city of St. Paul, Fire Station 14, and his family will all miss his presence dearly.

My thoughts and prayers are with his children, his family, and his brothers and sisters in the St. Paul Fire Department.

Rest in peace, Shane.

IRAN AND FAILED PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the President's failure to lead our Nation for a strategy of peace through strength has resulted in mass murders in the Middle East.

We have seen his failure to take action after Syria violated his declared "red line" and used chemical weapons against its citizens. We have seen his failure in recognizing ISIL-Daesh as a deadly threat to American families as the "JV" team. The President has been inaccurate in describing his dangerous nuclear deal.

Sadly, we read tragic stories of men, women, and children fleeing their homes in Syria. They are escaping a murderous government, the same government propped up by the Iranian regime. The President is establishing a failed dangerous legacy that has left the Middle East in wars and mayhem with refugees and migrants drowning at sea.

Ambassador John Bolton said it best when he remarked:

Obama's mistakes make it impossible to travel in time back to a theoretical world where sanctions might have derailed Iran's nuclear weapons program.

I believe the President has abandoned the young people of Iran seeking regime change.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and may the President by his actions never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

HONORING THE MEMORIES OF MORRIS AND BETH FAITELEWICZ AND YEHUDA BAYME

(Ms. VELÁZQUEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, three New Yorkers—Morris and Beth Faitelewicz, who celebrated their 33rd wedding anniversary in June, and Yehuda Bayme, fiancé to their only daughter—lost their lives in a Sullivan County car accident.

This tragedy is being felt deeply in the Lower East Side. Not only were they respected community members, but Morris and Beth had been involved in response and recovery efforts on 9/11.

Morris served as vice chair of Manhattan's Community Board 3, was city-wide coordinator and deputy inspector of NYPD's Auxiliary Volunteer Emergency Services Rescue Unit in the World Trade Center area, and was a dedicated Hatzolah member.

He was among the first to rush to the World Trade Center. For his efforts, he earned a Port Authority exceptional service award and a city council proclamation. Beth, an ER nurse, also served with distinction after the towers collapsed.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring their memories.

Rest in peace.

MAYERS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL SUCCESS

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Mayers Memorial Hospital in my district, the First District of California, in Fall River Mills, eastern Shasta County, not only for their commitment to deliver exemplary healthcare services to the northeast area of rural California, but also in congratulations for, after years of planning and diligence on their part, Mayers was recently awarded a \$21 million USDA rural development grant to address the hospital and region's most urgent needs, including replacement facilities for emergency departments, acute care, and diagnostic services, while making the facility compliant with California's rigid earthquake mandates that will make the building in seismic code by 2020.

Access to healthcare services is already critical and a big challenge in