

They owe the respect to the tour and to the guys they play alongside. They owe to the communities that have enriched them and rallied around them, their courtesy of defending and standing up for the sport and the league and the PGA tour in this country that has enabled them to prosper and has helped grow this game into one of the great economic engines and sport franchises in the world.

Shame on them for walking away from the PGA tour. God bless the PGA tour for pushing back and saying: You don't get to do that. God bless the members of the tour that are standing strong, standing alongside the community members, standing alongside all of the sponsors and the people that have made that work and have built such a great institution.

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

SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) for 30 minutes.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Madam Speaker, it is an honor to be here this evening with you and to talk about—during this time of the COVID pandemic—something that is near and dear to the hearts of the people impacted the most by this pandemic.

Madam Speaker, as you know, more than a million people now have perished because of the COVID pandemic, and 750,000 of them are American citizens over the age of 65. In addition, because of the war in Ukraine, because of this pandemic, and because of this inflation, who is the group in America that is most impacted by the pandemic and the ensuing inflation? It is the senior citizens of our country, and it is people over the age of 65. They are people who are on fixed income.

These individuals need the help of the United States Congress. I commend Chairman RICH NEAL, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, and a Social Security recipient himself, who knows and understands the necessity and the absolute dependence that so many of our fellow Americans have on the Nation's number one insurance program.

The insurance program that keeps our seniors off of poverty. It also happens to be the number one insurance plan for children. Madam Speaker, it is the number one plan for veterans who rely more on Social Security Disability than they do the VA.

For more than half of our fellow citizens who are on Social Security, it is the only benefit that they have. That benefit, on average, is \$16,000 per individual. Nobody gets wealthy on Social Security. Yet, it is our number one anti-poverty program for the elderly. It is the number one anti-poverty program for children. It has incredible benefits for people on disability, like our veterans.

Yet, here today, and just last Thursday, and before that, we learn of new plans from the Republican Study Committee and from Senator SCOTT—these are plans that will end Social Security. These are plans that say in 5 years these benefits will disappear.

The Ways and Means Committee has a bill to say: No, this is not the time to end Social Security, this is the time to enhance the benefits in Social Security. This is the time when our fellow seniors, who need this money to sustain themselves at base levels, are crying out for help from their country.

This is not the time, Senator SCOTT, for us to kill Social Security. It is not the time, I say to the Republican Study Committee, for us to end Social Security, cutting its benefits. For every year you call upon someone to raise the age of Social Security, that is a 7 percent cut.

How in God's name, in the face of this pandemic and with people living longer, do they need lesser benefits?

□ 1830

Madam Speaker, if you listen to the logic that people are living longer so we have to hike the age, how does that possibly benefit someone struggling to make ends meet? Those are the same people who are putting food back on the shelves or can't afford their prescription drugs.

How does that allow them to subsist by cutting their benefits because they are living longer?

Democrats have a plan, and basically that is what Congress should be all about: the vitality of ideas and placing those ideas side by side.

While the Republican Study Committee has said that, yes, they have a plan, it is former Congressman Sam Johnson's plan to make sure that Social Security is solvent. I served with Sam Johnson. There is no more honorable person who served in this body. His bill was never allowed to be brought forward by the Republican leadership. There was never a vote on that. The reason there was never a vote on it was because it cut benefits. It made Social Security solvent by cutting benefits. That is not the way to fix Social Security.

Social Security does not need to be cut. The benefits need to be enhanced.

More than 3 million of our fellow Americans receive below-poverty-level checks from Social Security after they have paid into Social Security for a lifetime, Madam Speaker. That is flat-out wrong.

The COLA for Social Security has been so ineffective that it is long overdue to have a change that embraces a COLA based on the actual expenses that seniors incur, whether that is heating and cooling their home or paying for home heating oil or just simply paying for their pharmaceuticals. It is long overdue that Congress enhances the benefits of Social Security so that people can subsist and survive.

Nobody is getting wealthy on Social Security or reserving a condo in Flor-

ida with the money they receive from this. These are people who are struggling to make ends meet.

Congressman NEAL's committee on social equity most recently pointed out, as well, that the equity and the difference between what people of color and specifically women of color receive in terms of benefits is appalling. They receive below-poverty-level checks after contributing to the program their entire life.

Poverty level is \$12,600.

How would you subsist on less than that, Madam Speaker?

Americans need to rise up. They need to understand that what we need now during this pandemic and during this time of inflation is to assist people so that they get the money that they need to make the payments they richly deserve.

That is why the proposal before the Ways and Means Committee enhances benefits. It provides a 2 percent across-the-board increase. It makes sure that nobody can retire into poverty, and it makes the new floor for Social Security 125 percent of what the poverty level is. It makes sure that a new COLA is instituted, and, yes, it also makes sure, as President Biden has called for, the repeal of WEP and GPO.

Where is the Republican plan?

Their committee says that they are following Sam Johnson, and yet the subcommittee has never received a bill in the last 4 years that would indicate what their plan of action is—though it is detailed here, as Mr. SCOTT has outlined, to end Social Security in 5 years. Ending Social Security—killing Social Security—is not any way to help out those citizens—those fellow Americans—who need this assistance the most.

It is long overdue in this Chamber and also in the Senate. And even though MITCH MCCONNELL may stand up and deny that they are going to take forward Senator SCOTT's proposal, he very smugly says when asked what his agenda is that they don't have an agenda. They will tell the American voters what their agenda is after they win.

America can take it to the bank, Madam Speaker: just like they did under the Biden administration, they are coming for your Social Security and Medicare. They outline it in no uncertain terms, both in Senator SCOTT's proposal and also in the Republican Study Group's proposal as well.

They are coming after your Social Security at a time when Americans need it most.

There is a difference. Democrats are here to recognize that it has been 51 years since Congress has enhanced Social Security. It has been 51 years since Congress has done anything to enhance the number one insurance program for our elderly and the number one insurance plan for our children.

It also is the Nation's most effective program. I hail from a part of the country that is an insurance center, and

there they know what a 99 percent loss ratio means. What that means is that Social Security has been able to operate, function, and be the most efficient governmental agency because it does so with less than 1 percent administrative costs to make sure that Americans receive the benefits that they need.

The truth of the matter is that the Social Security Administration needs more funding so that they can become more efficient because this pandemic has also hit both governmental employees as well as it has our citizens and has made servicing more challenging, which is all the more reason for government not to be talking about cutting Social Security, as our Republican colleagues are, but enhancing Social Security so that both administratively and individually people are getting the services that they need and that they richly deserve. It has been 51 years since Congress has taken any positive action to enhance people's benefits.

Madam Speaker, a gallon of milk cost 72 cents in 1971. Look at the cost today. Look at the burden that people on fixed incomes have.

Help is on the way. The Ways and Means Committee will mark up and send to the floor Social Security 2100: A Sacred Trust. A sacred trust is what President Biden labeled Social Security because the American people understand this.

How do they know?

It is simple. We don't have to go back to 1935 and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. We only have to go back to 2008 and 2009, during the Great Recession, when people saw their 401(k) become a 101(k). Yet during that same time period, Social Security never missed a payment—not a pension payment, not a spousal payment, not a dependent child payment, and not a disability payment.

It is America's number one insurance program. It is America's most efficient and effective program, and it needs to be enhanced. It needs to be augmented with benefits that haven't been adjusted in 51 years.

During this same time period—and we could go back, as Chairman NEAL often talks about, to the S&L crisis. What happened during that?

People at the bottom lost everything. People at the top managed to protect their benefits and pensions. And the same was true in 2008 and 2009. People who endured that recession saw their 401(k)s become a 101(k)s. People at the top kept their pensions and benefits.

Thank God for Social Security. Americans understand this, and that is why they overwhelmingly—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—support enhancing these benefits.

Madam Speaker, how can you go home to your district in this pandemic during this time and say to your brothers, your sisters, your mothers, fathers, aunts and uncles, the people you work with, the people in your community whom you go to church with, that no, this is the time to cut benefits?

This is the time we should end Social Security in 5 years?

This is the time we should raise the age so that you can't receive benefits?

How about we do something simple? How about we vote to enhance Social Security? The simple thing is to vote.

If you agree with Senator SCOTT's proposal to end Social Security, then by all means vote for it. Put it out there. Let's contrast the programs: the Democratic initiative to enhance Social Security and the Republican position to cut the benefits.

It would be great to have people join together, as we often do here, and come up with a solution; but instead, we have been waiting for 4 years now on the Social Security Subcommittee and haven't received a single piece of legislation that would address this, that outlines these bills, and that says exactly what they would do to enhance Social Security.

Instead, as has been reported in the news, what these proposals do is end Social Security or cut Social Security. That is death by 1,000 slashes.

Whom are they hurting?

Whom are they slashing here?

Our fellow American citizens.

So if we want to come together, we are open. We have accepted many good ideas that have come forward with regard to enhancing Social Security.

Congress hasn't done its responsibility. There is nothing the President can do through executive authority and nothing the Supreme Court is going to act on.

□ 1845

This requires congressional action. The American people are watching, and either these bodies, the House and Senate, are going to take action or they are going to doom people to Senator SCOTT's proposal to end Social Security in 5 years.

The Republican Study Committee said this is immoral, that Social Security, if nothing was done, would be cut by 24 percent in 2034. They propose raising the age and cutting people's benefits in order to make Social Security solvent.

That is not the way to make the system solvent, on the backs of American people who are already overburdened and suffering.

In this time of inflation, let us make sure that we are sending the relief to the people who need it the most, people who have worked all their lives, paid into a system, and understand that this is an earned benefit.

Rise up, America. Let your elected representatives in the Senate and House know that help is on the way, and either you are for enhancing benefits to deal with inflation during this pandemic or you are for cutting them. Let your message ring loud and clear to elected officials who are about to vote on this very important agenda.

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

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 11(b) of House Resolution 188, the House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon (at 6 o'clock and 47 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, June 16, 2022, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

EC-4345. A letter from the President and Chair, Board of Directors, Export-Import Bank of the United States, transmitting a transaction pursuant to section 2(b)(3) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, pursuant to 12 U.S.C. 635(b)(3); July 31, 1945, ch. 341, Sec. 2 (as added by Public Law 102-266, Sec. 102); (106 Stat. 95); to the Committee on Financial Services.

EC-4346. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's FY 2017 Report to Congress on Community Services Block Grant Discretionary Activities — Community Economic Development and Rural Community Development Programs; to the Committee on Education and Labor.

EC-4347. A letter from the Chair, Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, transmitting the Commission's June 2022 Report to the Congress: Medicare and the Health Care Delivery System, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 1395b-6(b)(1)(D); Aug. 14, 1935, ch. 531, title XVIII, Sec. 1805(b)(1)(D) (as amended by Public Law 111-148, Sec. 2801(b)(2)); (124 Stat. 332); jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

EC-4348. A letter from the Senior Bureau Official, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a Report to Congress on the Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Australia Concerning Defense Trade Cooperation (Treaty Doc. 110-10), Section 2(8); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-4349. A letter from the Senior Bureau Official, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a Memorandum of Justification for the Drawdown Under Section 506(a)(1) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to Provide Immediate Assistance to Ukraine; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-4350. A letter from the Senior Bureau Official, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a Determination Under Section 506(a)(1) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (FAA) to Provide Military Assistance to Ukraine; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

EC-4351. A letter from the Chair, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, transmitting the Board's Office of Inspector General Semiannual Report to Congress for the six-month period ending March 31, 2022; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

EC-4352. A letter from the Deputy Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's Inspector General Semiannual Report to Congress for the period of October 1, 2021 through March 31, 2022; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.

EC-4353. A letter from the Chairman and Chief Executive and Administrative Officer, Federal Labor Relations Authority, transmitting the Authority's 67th Semiannual Inspector General Report for the period October 1, 2021, through March 31, 2022; to the Committee on Oversight and Reform.