

Order and sharing their thoughts on these very important issues, and I yield back the balance of my time.

PROTECT AND ENHANCE SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 9, 2023, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, we are here this afternoon to discuss America's number one anti-poverty program for the elderly and the number one antipoverty program for children. It is Social Security.

I commend my colleague from the Ways and Means Committee, Mr. MOORE, for his work on the committee, but here is the issue, Mr. Speaker: This Congress that we are all a part of has not enhanced Social Security now going on 53 years. 1971 was the last time the United States Congress, which has the responsibility, enhanced Social Security for any of its recipients. Mr. Speaker, 10,000 baby boomers a day become eligible for Social Security, and since 1971, Congress has not taken any action.

I am joined by my colleagues today as we come to this floor and beseech our fellow colleagues to do one simple thing: Vote. That is our responsibility.

We have a very specific plan that we have put forward. There is also this other plan that is out there, some sort of debt commission that is going to go behind closed doors and decide what they will cut with respect to Social Security.

The American public overwhelmingly—Democrat, Republican, and Independents—all say we do not need cuts to the very essential programs that we rely on as a country. For more than 40 percent, Mr. Speaker, of all Americans, Social Security is the only pension that they have, and Congress hasn't acted in more than 53 years.

We need to enhance the program. We need to enhance it in a way that makes sure that everyone gets an across-the-board increase, especially for 5 million of our fellow Americans, mostly women, who get below-poverty-level checks from the government of the wealthiest nation in the world because Congress has not taken the time or the effort.

Who are these people? They are your brothers, your sisters, your aunts, your uncles, your neighbors, the people you go to church with.

Where does this money go? Right back into every single Member's district.

Mr. MOORE of Utah has 110,000 Social Security recipients in his district. Every single Member of Congress is getting a card that tells them how many recipients they have in their district, what they receive, whether they are dependents, spouses, or disabled.

That is what we are focused on. We want a vote, Mr. Speaker, because the

American people demand it. That is why I am joined here for this Special Order hour on this floor by so many of our colleagues. There are so many of us that we hope everyone will recognize their time and have consideration for their colleagues, but I will also point out the more than 350 groups across the Nation that support the Social Security 2100 Act, including the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, Social Security Works, the NAACP, the AFL-CIO, Paralyzed Veterans of America, the National Education Association, and I could go on. Instead, I am going to yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL), a leader on the Subcommittee on Social Security.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my brothers and sisters on behalf of more than 124,000 of my constituents in north Jersey in the Ninth District who rely on Social Security each and every month. They rely on it.

To some, as in the entire country, that is their only means of income, of survival. That is how Social Security was established in the 1930s and implemented a few years later.

Social Security is one of America's greatest success stories. I remember the first time I ran for Congress in 1996. I walked into a room prepared to deal with housing codes and public housing, but the only questions folks asked me: "Where do you stand on Social Security?" "Do you want to privatize Social Security?"

Social Security is a success story. After nearly 90 years, it still stands as a monument to decency and dignity and the birthright of hardworking Americans, yet throughout its storied history, Mr. LARSON, it has been under attack. Even in 1935, it was the subject of attacks and lies from day one.

The Republican Study Committee, which represents three-quarters of House Republicans, proposed slashing Social Security benefits by \$718 billion. The GOP leadership wants to create a so-called fiscal commission in our government funding bill. That is a wolf in sheep's clothing.

I am proud to join my friend and colleague, Congressman JOHN LARSON, in a letter opposing this cynical ploy to slash Social Security and Medicare.

Without aggressive action, Social Security lurches toward insolvency. Congress has a sacred responsibility to fight for its future. The same question asked 26 years ago is asked of me today. That is why I am standing with Mr. LARSON on his Social Security 2100 Act, to ensure the long-term strength and solvency of Social Security.

The Social Security 2100 Act provides paid-for benefit enhancements while not raising taxes on middle-class families. It is a no-brainer.

Our bill ends the painful 5-month disability waiting period. Who can justify that in this day and age?

It would ensure Americans suffering with permanent disorders like Huntington's disease get the help they need without red tape or delay.

The bill eliminates the windfall elimination provisions so that firefighters, police officers, teachers, and others get the full benefits that they have earned.

With the Social Security 2100 Act, we are fighting for our seniors who have worked their entire lives and rely on Social Security to make ends meet. We are fighting for working families so that no one who pays into the system over a lifetime ever retires in poverty.

We must get this done for the American people, Mr. Speaker. There are no excuses.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, there is no person on the committee who has fought harder for the repeal of WEP and GPO and who understands the significance and impact that Social Security has on so many of her constituents and constituents all across this country than Ms. SÁNCHEZ.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Ms. SÁNCHEZ).

Ms. SÁNCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman JOHN LARSON for being the chief advocate for reforming our Social Security system. It is high time that Congress acted to preserve those benefits for people who have earned those benefits by paying into the system over their working lives.

I want to touch on another issue that concerns me with respect to Social Security, and that is that we see an increasing number of people who rely on those benefits. Since 2010, the number of individuals who rely on Social Security has increased over 21 percent. Over that same period of time, Social Security's administrative funding for basic operations has fallen by 17 percent after you account for inflation.

Those shortages—that is, more people needing services but the budget being cut—have caused a significant delay across Social Security for our most vulnerable populations, including those who are awaiting disability benefits.

I have a constituent from my district who has been working with my case-work team in my district office for more than a year and a half. This individual had a stroke and applied for disability benefits with Social Security in August 2022 after becoming paralyzed. He was denied those benefits in June 2023.

□ 1630

He appealed his decision that same month and didn't receive a response from Social Security until November of 2023, stating that his application needed additional review. After 17 months without any form of income, his case was finally approved just this week. Americans should not have to wait this long to see these necessary earned benefits.

Instead of working with Democrats to ensure that Social Security has a better capability to serve constituents like that one, my Republican colleagues proposed devastating cuts to Social Security. Additional cuts to an

agency that is already struggling with a significant backlog would be catastrophic for seniors and individuals with disabilities. After they do these budget cuts, then my Republican colleagues want to turn around and blame the staff at the Social Security Administration for not being able to handle the backlog.

Unfortunately, the story that I told about my constituent is not unique. There are countless Americans who suffer from disabilities and are unable to get their benefits in a timely manner. These Americans deserve better.

I again thank my colleague, Mr. LARSON, for leading the charge on reforming the system, on holding up our end of the bargain to people who have paid into the system over their entire working lives.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I again want to point out that both Ms. SANCHEZ and Ms. MOORE, who will be speaking next, understand completely that Social Security is an earned benefit. It is often referred to on the other side as an entitlement. It is hardly an entitlement. Every American knows when they look at their paycheck that it says FICA. That stands for Federal Insurance Contributions Act. Whose? Yours.

GWEN MOORE understands that, and that is why she has been fighting on this committee to make sure that we not only extend the solvency, but we enhance the benefits.

Imagine this, Richard Nixon was President of the United States the last time Congress enhanced any benefits to Social Security. Do you think things have changed a little bit over those years?

Every single member of the public ought to be outraged by this. It is not anything the President can do with executive order. It is not anything that is going to happen through the judiciary. It is only through the United States Congress.

What are we asking of the Congress? We are asking them to vote.

That is what GWEN MOORE does every week on the committee.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE).

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman LARSON for holding this Special Order on the importance of enhancing Social Security.

Mr. LARSON talked about how things have not changed for the last 80 years since Social Security has been in existence. I will tell you one thing; Social Security has not changed its emphasis and focus on allowing our workers to retire and age in dignity and not in poverty. We should and can enhance the program so that it will be solvent and useful for current and future beneficiaries.

Take, for example, some provisions that I have included in the Social Security 2100 Act. That is to provide beneficiaries receiving payments for 20 years or more an enhancement. As our population lives longer, more and more

people may end up living out their savings, especially women. As our students continue to face the daunting cost of pursuing higher education, it is critical that we reinstate the student benefits of retired, deceased, or disabled workers. These reforms would be particularly meaningful for students of color and low-income families.

Before closing, I add my voice in supporting how important it is that Social Security 2100 recognizes that caregiving is, in fact, uncompensated work. In the United States, 43.5 million people, mostly women, work as unpaid caregivers to their children, aging parents, or to an adult family member with a disability, and they don't receive a single dime. The value of that unpaid caregiving is estimated at over half a trillion dollars annually.

This bill provides caregiver credits to ensure that people, mostly women, are not penalized when it comes time to claim their Social Security benefits for taking time out of the workforce to care for children or other dependents.

I thank Mr. LARSON for his continued commitment to preserve and enhance Social Security.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative MOORE.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania has done just an incredible job on the Ways and Means Committee, again advocating on a regular basis, especially for the more than 5 million fellow Americans who get below-poverty-level checks from Social Security. We are not here just to extend the solvency of Social Security. We have a plan that the President of the United States supports, that is fully paid for. It is paid for by having people—are you ready for this?—who are making over \$400,000—that is about six-tenths of 1 percent of the American people. Raise your hand in the gallery if you are making more than \$400,000.

By doing just that, we will both extend the solvency and enhance the program that is fully paid for and make sure the trust fund stays intact. That is what the gentleman from Pennsylvania fights for.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. EVANS).

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. LARSON for hosting this Special Order hour so we can discuss the importance of this country's most effective anti-poverty program.

Social Security is an earned benefit. It is the insurance people pay for with every paycheck, and it is the bedrock of retirement security, with benefits guaranteed to nearly all seniors.

In my district in the City of Brotherly Love, Philadelphia, there are about 120,000 Social Security recipients who receive \$194 million in monthly benefits. That includes many of our Nation's most vulnerable, including retirees, folks with disabilities, and children.

Social Security's guaranteed benefits keep many recipients from all demo-

graphic groups out of poverty, but these protections are especially vital to Black and Brown Americans. Without Social Security, 21.7 million more adults and children would be below the poverty line. That is why Democrats are consistently fighting to stop Republicans' attempts to dismantle this vital program.

Time and time again, Republicans have put forth plan after plan to cut Social Security benefits and raise the minimum retirement age. In the current Congress, they proposed a fiscal commission to address the national debt, which we all know is just a backdoor way to cut essential programs like Social Security and Medicare.

However, in contrast to Republicans, Democrats are offering a proposal that would protect and expand the Social Security program. That is why I am proud to support Congressman LARSON's Social Security 2100 Act. This transformative legislation would permanently increase benefits by 2 percent across the board on average for all Social Security beneficiaries for the first time in 52 years. We would pay for this bill by ensuring millionaires and billionaires finally pay their fair share into Social Security.

The American public is on our side when it comes down to protecting and expanding Social Security. Poll after poll finds that the vast majority of Americans believe Social Security benefits should not be reduced in any way and support a proposal to increase benefits. That is why I remain steadfast in opposing any and all cuts to Social Security, and I will continue to work with my Democratic colleagues to protect, expand, and deliver Social Security benefits to all those who have earned them.

Again, I thank Congressman LARSON for hosting this Special Order hour and thank him for his consistent leadership.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania. I, again, thank the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, Social Security Works, the Alliance for Retired Americans, the NAACP, the AFL-CIO, and AARP, which came out most recently condemning the so-called commission that is coming down the pike.

Every American should be aware of this. When they are talking about a debt commission, what they are talking about is cutting Social Security, a commission that goes behind closed doors and without public hearings decides what is going to be the future of Social Security.

Americans—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents—support Social Security and enhancing it. Nobody knows that better than STEVE HORSFORD, who represents more than 150,000 Social Security recipients in his home State of Nevada.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HORSFORD).

Mr. HORSFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Connecticut

(Mr. LARSON) for bringing us together for this important Special Order and to thank him for his tremendous leadership on Social Security as the ranking member of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Social Security and for introducing the Social Security 2100 Act, which I am proud to be an original cosponsor of.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the urgent need for us to take action to protect and to improve one of the most important programs in our Nation, Social Security. It is shameful that it has been more than 50 years since Social Security benefits have been improved.

Social Security is vital to making sure our senior citizens, the disabled, and many children in Nevada and all across the country are able to keep a roof over their heads and to keep food on the table.

Mr. Speaker, there are 149,700 Social Security recipients in Nevada's Fourth Congressional District, which I am honored to represent. This includes 113,832 retirees, 8,380 children, 11,279 widows and spouses, and 16,209 disabled workers. Collectively, they receive \$248 million in monthly benefits in our district alone.

When beneficiaries receive their Social Security checks, what do they do? They turn around and spend that money in our communities, helping to churn the local economic engine.

I know some of my colleagues on the other side will say we can't afford it. Well, the truth is, we can't not afford it. By simply ensuring millionaires and billionaires pay just their fair share of FICA that everyone else who works every day does, we can absolutely afford it. With these funds, we can increase benefits for all recipients by 2 percent, which would be the first general increase in Social Security in over 52 years. You tell my constituents we can't afford it, and meanwhile they are struggling to afford their rent and their food.

Something else that I hear a lot about from my constituents is the fact that this bill, as proposed by Congressman LARSON, repeals the Windfall Elimination Provision, the WEP, and the Government Pension Offset that currently penalizes many workers who have worked in the public sector, including teachers in Nevada.

□ 1645

Mr. Speaker, I have one of the most diverse districts in the country, and I also have a significant military presence and many veterans who live in my district.

Social Security's progressive benefit formula is particularly important for groups that tend to earn lower wages during their working lives, which include African Americans and Latino families. For example, in 2020, average earnings were about \$41,000 for African Americans and \$38,000 for Hispanics.

The progressive formula means benefits replace a higher share of preretirement earnings for low-wage workers.

People of color are less likely to work for employers who offer pensions and less likely to receive pension benefits in retirement, which weakens their security.

In 2014, 30 percent of African American seniors, 19 percent of Latino seniors, and 25 percent of Asian American seniors received income from pensions or retirement benefits other than Social Security. This compares to 47 percent of White seniors.

Mr. Speaker, many of the Latino and Black seniors in my district and all across the country rely on Social Security for all or nearly all of their income.

After decades of hard work, they deserve the benefits that they have earned, and they deserve a program that keeps their benefits in line with inflation and the cost of living.

By preserving and expanding benefits, Social Security 2100 would increase retirement security for people of color who have worked hard and who depend upon Social Security in their retirement.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, nearly one in five adult Social Security beneficiaries are veterans. Military servicemembers pay FICA, earning future retirement, survivor, and disability benefits. Seriously injured veterans may be eligible for Social Security disability benefits.

Over 8 million veterans received Social Security benefits in 2022. This is more than 5.41 million veterans who received disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Social Security 2100 Act will extend the Social Security trust fund until 2066 and increase benefits for every recipient.

Only we, the Congress, can make the necessary changes to protect and enhance Social Security, and we must take that action.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on this side of the aisle to put people over politics and to protect Social Security.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Nevada. When he spoke, I was reminded of John Lewis, our fellow colleague on the Ways and Means Committee, who said that, in fact, Social Security is the civil rights movement.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Mrs. TRAHAN), someone who understands, with the birthday of Martin Luther King coming up this Monday, our celebration of that, and one of our leaders who truly understands the fierce urgency of now and what it means to have to pass Social Security for the constituents that we represent who need it the most.

Mrs. TRAHAN. Mr. Speaker, the overwhelming majority of Americans—Democrats, Republicans, and Independents alike—are clear in their support for Social Security. In fact, nearly 9 in every 10 Americans oppose cutting Social Security.

That is because for the last 88 years, Social Security has helped millions of

Americans retire from a lifetime of work with the dignity that they deserve.

Despite the undeniable success and popularity of the program, House Republicans have remained relentless in their fight to dismantle and defund it.

What is worse, Mr. Speaker, is Republicans turning their backs on a fundamental promise to the American people—a sacred trust—where contributing to Social Security means the same safety net that supported our grandparents will be there to support us in retirement.

House Democrats still believe in that sacred trust. We want to uphold our end of the promise. That is why I am proud to support and join Congressman LARSON and members of the House Democratic Caucus in supporting Social Security 2100 to increase seniors' benefits, protect against inflation, and strengthen the program for generations to come.

I thank the gentleman from Connecticut for his relentless, tireless leadership on this vital issue.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Massachusetts.

I yield to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY). Together, we have gone across the State of Connecticut as we have talked about Social Security and its importance and significance.

Nobody understands it better, especially its impact on teachers and firefighters and police officers and municipal workers who have long been prevented through WEP and GPO. Under this bill, that all changes because of his efforts.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I begin by thanking my colleague, Congressman JOHN LARSON, for his thoughtful, courageous leadership on this issue, crafting Social Security 2100, which is the only comprehensive, paid-for measure which enhances Social Security and averts the 2034 cliff that this country is going to encounter if Congress does not act.

As Mr. LARSON stated, when the social insurance program was created in 1935, signed into law by Franklin Roosevelt, it was created as an insurance program.

Congress, over time and on numerous occasions, has reformed the bill to protect the basic promise, which was made by the Congress and by President Roosevelt, to make sure that people who are retired, children who have lost a parent, and in recent times, people with disability are protected from the vagaries of life.

Again, we have stepped forward and taken care of challenges, fiscal challenges, that the law has encountered.

What JOHN's bill would do, in essence, is extend the solvency of Social Security to 2066. We would avoid the cliff that we are going to hit in 2035. It would not gouge or cut any benefits.

The Republican Study Committee is talking about raising the retirement

age. That is a Social Security cut for people who have paid into this program out of payroll year in and year out.

It increases the benefits by 2 percent on average for all beneficiaries. It rebases the program so that people will not receive Social Security and be below the poverty line.

It is exactly, in other words, what this country is looking for, a program that affects every single American, every single family member.

Everybody cares about Social Security. It is our job, just like prior Congresses when they have been approaching these fiscal challenges, to act.

What we need is for JOHN's bill to be taken up and voted on. We don't need commissions that are going to take this bill behind closed doors with no transparency, which again is exactly the opposite of what the people of this country want.

They want to see what we are doing because this affects them and all those years of insurance payments that they have put into this program.

We need to take up JOHN LARSON's bill, Social Security 2100. Again, I implore the leadership of this Congress to move and to act and to not go down the path of a nontransparent commission, which is going to shut out the American people. That is not how we fix Social Security.

I thank Mr. LARSON for his leadership. Let's move forward on Social Security 2100.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Connecticut.

I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR), the female dean of the United States Congress, who has more than 143,000 Social Security recipients in her district and has been a tireless fighter for Social Security before I even came to the United States Congress. We applaud her efforts.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member LARSON for yielding time and for his noble, tireless work safeguarding Social Security for the benefit of all Americans.

For nearly a century, America has made a sacred promise—those who work hard throughout their lives will benefit from the fruits of their labor upon retirement.

Social Security promises a safe and secure retirement for tens of millions of Americans during their golden years. Without action, that promise is at risk.

I hear from thousands of retirees across Northwestern Ohio who want to see a responsible solution to refinance Social Security going forward. One in five Social Security beneficiaries are veterans.

Let me observe that the billionaire class must join the vast majority of Americans in paying their fair share into the system itself.

By making that happen, the Social Security 2100 Act, championed by Congressman LARSON and all of us, will increase benefits for current and new

beneficiaries, protect retirees against inflation, and repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision.

We must push for a vote on the House floor as soon as possible. The Social Security 2100 Act is one of the most important bills before this Congress.

There are 182 House cosponsors of this bill. I ask Speaker JOHNSON to please move this bill to the floor for a vote.

Social Security is an earned benefit, and America made a promise to workers, and Democrats are committed to making good on that promise.

I am the granddaughter of immigrants. They worked at the lowest wages and the worst jobs—first fired, last hired. They simply could not have existed if it were not for Social Security. The same is true for my parents.

You see, Social Security is not just a program. It is a trust, a sacred insurance trust, and that trust is intergenerational. I thank Congressman JOHN LARSON for his dogged, persistent efforts to move this issue forward.

I may be the only Member here in this Chamber tonight who was present in the 98th Congress in April of 1983 after I was first elected to Congress and soon after became a deciding vote in April of that year for the refinancing of Social Security for the next generation.

What an unforgettable moment that was. I sat right in that seat right there, and I stood and I cheered because we had fought so hard for that in the prior election.

That close, eventful vote, so extremely important to refinancing Social Security for the first time in a generation, passed. Now, Congress must meet its responsibility for the succeeding generation.

The Speaker of the House back then was Tip O'Neill of Massachusetts. We had a Republican President, Ronald Reagan.

There had been a commission to preserve Social Security and Medicare before I became a Member of Congress.

In the same way Congressman LARSON has led this effort, this House had a member from Florida, Claude Pepper, who chaired the Aging Committee.

They called him Red Pepper, and like Congressman LARSON, he was a heart-and-soul Democrat from the inside and out and just a great guy.

We were able to move passage of the refinancing of Social Security for the next generation, and I knew that I had helped do that as a younger Member.

At that time, the country was also in a deep recession, and we knew that Social Security as an earned benefit was paid through hard work, and it deserved to be lifted again.

It also insures children whose parents or guardians have died. Two-thirds of families in my district rely on Social Security or Medicare benefits, and they are truly lifelines for millions of people.

Medicare has worked too, and we need to do what is possible to make all

healthcare more affordable for the American people.

We know the Social Security insurance program is something America can renew for all our families. We know it works, it is proven, and it lifts all boats.

From an economic standpoint, to pull the rug out from under Social Security would cause not only harm to individuals but economic harm in every Congressional district in this country.

People use Social Security to buy food, to pay their utility bills, to pay copays on their medical services, and for the basics of life.

These aren't families that squander money, but they have earned retirement security, and they watch every penny.

We in Ohio want to express a special thanks to Congressman LARSON for including in the bill the Windfall Elimination Provision, which harms our working families so very much. This issue does not impact every single State, but believe me, it really impacts Ohioans.

Again, I thank my colleagues for being here tonight with us who championed protecting this earned benefit and social safety net, and I and all of us here stand with America's working people and retirees to protect and improve Social Security.

Though each of us represents different communities, we, all together, represent America. We know that with the unwavering leadership of Congressman JOHN LARSON, he will lead us to a day where Social Security 2100 is the law of the land.

I thank Congressman JOHN LARSON for his perseverance and for helping to move our Nation forward to protect the hard-earned benefits for generations to come.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Connecticut has 20 minutes remaining.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, we have 20 minutes remaining, and we have about 12 people who are sitting here, so I hope our colleagues are mindful of that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE), who has more than 98,000 Social Security recipients in her district who receive more than \$143 million monthly in that district, as we indicated just how vitally important Social Security is as an economic development plan as well.

□ 1700

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman from Connecticut for yielding. He is long serving and longstanding, and I have been together with Mr. LARSON on this issue it has to be two decades, and I can only thank him for realizing that people will simply die—I am going to

say that—without the lifeline of Social Security. He has recognized that, and that is why we are in the fight.

That is why we have to continue the fight. That is why we have to come back in the next Congress and get this done because if it is not done in this Congress—we must get it done. We must get it done.

Let me give you breaking news. Let me tell you why we are all on the floor, why there are 12 Members on the floor and there were others on the floor previously. This is a national crisis. The House Republican Study Committee, a caucus of 176 House Republican Members, has proposed multiple harsh cuts to Social Security in the fiscal year 2024 budget. Although the budget is vague on details, they will be holding—and may have held—a press conference, and reporting has come out that they intend to cut your Social Security. They intend to violate the very special sacred trust—yes, do violence to the sacred trust that from the days of President Roosevelt every American—except those, of course, that were in some of the professions of people of color that we had to fix—every American felt that they could live, that they could survive because of Social Security.

I want to thank JOHN LARSON for championing together on the Social Security 2100 Act to be able to bring about an increase of benefits of 2 percent across the board on the average for all Social Security beneficiaries for the first time in 52 years; improve the cost-of-living adjustment so it reflects inflation; increase benefits to boost lower income seniors; improve benefits for middle-income widows and widowers; restore student benefits up to age 26; increase access to benefits for children living with grandparents and other relatives; and celebrate—celebrate repealing the windfall elimination provision, which means in the government pension offset that currently penalizes public servants.

I can walk the streets of the 18th Congressional District, and when all of these hardworking public servants are saying: Have you helped me? I can say yes. We will end the 5-month waiting period.

Mr. Speaker, I am here today to join Mr. LARSON in vigorous support of the Social Security 2100 Act and to be able to say that we are here because there is a crisis because there is purposeful intent to snatch Social Security from the hands of beneficiaries, including children. I want to stand with you in the passage of H.R. 2100 because I want the lifeline to continue. I want the story of President Roosevelt to continue in the hands of Americans, people of color, those who have started in life in a low income and those who may end life in a low income but have as their lifeline Social Security.

I am standing with you.

Mr. Speaker, since 1935, the Federal Government has provided Social Security coverage to the American people and kept the

promise that a lifetime of work will be rewarded with the peace of mind, certainty, and a sense of stable retirement.

Social Security has transformed what it means to grow old in this country. This system allows our citizens to retire gracefully and with honor.

Social Security is the United States' most effective anti-poverty line.

Social Security keeps 22.5 million Americans, including children above the poverty line.

There are 98,576 Social Security recipients in Texas who receive \$143 million in monthly benefits. 8,118 of those are children who rely on our support to go to school every day and live safe and secure lives.

In the 18th Congressional district, Social Security recipients inject more than \$97 million into the local economy annually; nationwide, this figure is \$775 billion.

It is Congress' responsibility to keep that promise and to fund Social Security for all Americans. Congress must also ensure the benefits keep up with Americans' expenses—today, tomorrow, and forever.

Social Security is a lifeline for many. Social Security has been a stable and secure source of income for millions of seniors and families, many of whom desperately need it.

As our population ages and increases in size, we must protect the benefits that we have become accustomed to for current Social Security recipients and all future recipients.

We must work together to strengthen and protect Social Security, which is why I am a strong supporter of H.R. 4583, the Social Security 2100 Act.

Far too often, it is overlooked the seismic impact that Social Security has had in shaping our national economy and the structure of life chances for hundreds of millions of Americans through the years.

According to the 2022 Social Security Trustees report, if Congress does not act to correct Social Security funding issues, retirees will start receiving reduced benefits starting in 2034.

Reduced benefits would force millions of Americans into poverty.

For about half of senior beneficiaries, Social Security provides a majority of their income.

These seniors have worked extensively and paid into the Social Security system like they were asked to.

They held up their end of the bargain.

Congress must ensure that we are able to hold up our end of the bargain.

H.R. 4583 would increase social security benefits, improve the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), ensure no one retires into poverty, and repeals provisions that currently penalize many public servants.

We must continue to support our seniors, veterans, and children who all benefit from Social Security.

I urge my colleagues to support this vital legislation.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. I thank the gentlewoman for her continued input and support over the last several decades.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. CARTWRIGHT), who has been key as an original cosponsor of the Social Security 2100 Act and also for his passion about the people in his district who are in such need

of Social Security to make sure that it is there today, tomorrow, and in the future.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I would inquire of Mr. LARSON, if he would yield for a quick question.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Sure.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. It is my recollection, I could be wrong, but I think it was in the year 2014 that you first came out with the Social Security 2100 Act. Am I correct in that?

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. That is correct.

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. So here we are 10 years on, and I want you to know I was an original cosponsor of that in 2014, and I was proud to do it, and I thank you for dreaming this whole idea up because it is so important.

We know that it is the retirement of the baby boomer generation, this glut of population going into retirement that is the problem. We know that 2035 is the current doomsday year when we are not able to pay 100 cents on the dollar on claims. It is not a surprise that this has been coming because we knew about the baby boomer generation, and that is why you came up with this 10 years ago because it is not a surprise, and we have to prepare for it.

Mr. Speaker, I speak here not of behalf of myself but on behalf of 176,000 beneficiaries of Social Security in my Congressional District in northeastern Pennsylvania, the vast majority of which are seniors, and the answer is we can't do nothing. We know what happens if we do nothing and we just get closer and closer to the 2035 cliff or whatever year it is going to be.

I am sorry to say that if we do nothing, we end up with the Republican answer, and the Republican answer again and again and again is cut benefits and raise the retirement age. That is what happens if we do nothing.

Cut benefits? Cut benefits? This is a program that is one of the most successful government programs—it is not even a government program; it is an insurance program. It is one of the most successful things that the government has done for American citizens in the history of our republic.

We have kept millions of people from dying in poverty as seniors in this country. We know that right now in excess of 30 percent of seniors receiving Social Security benefits have no other viable source of support. If you take it away from them, they will die in poverty.

We know that probably the most outrageous thing of all is it breaks a promise if you cut benefits. The promise was that you work your whole life, you pay in the premiums and your FICA, you pay in your whole work life, and you will be protected from poverty in your senior years. This would break the promise to cut the benefits.

Raising the retirement age? It has already been described as a cut. It is a cut. It is a change. All of a sudden you have to work longer and longer and longer. To those of us who sit behind a

desk for a living it is not that big of a problem, but there are people who have to lift and carry and climb and dig. And to make them do these things into their senior years just because we refused to do anything about this impending fiscal cliff, it is not right, it is not ethical, and it is not American.

Every time you hear the words “fiscal commission,” oh, we should have a fiscal commission, ladies and gentlemen, put your hands on your wallets when you hear those words “fiscal commission” because that is all they ever have proposed with fiscal commissions, cutting benefits and raising the retirement age.

The right answer is the Social Security 2100 Act. We have to adjust the cap so it makes sense so that it is egalitarian so that all Americans are included so that we can raise the benefits by 2 percent for the first time in over 50 years. We have to adjust this cap. We have to pass this bill. We have to put people over politics and protect Social Security.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. I thank the gentleman for his remarks, and I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. LIEU).

Mr. LIEU. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative LARSON for his terrific leadership on Social Security. Many people here have been hearing about Social Security 2100.

I just want to talk a little bit about what is actually in this amazing bill. It increases a number of benefits, including increases benefits 2 percent across the board. It improves the cost-of-living adjustment. It increases benefits to boost lower income seniors. It improves benefits for widows and widowers. It restores student benefits up to age 26. It increases access to benefits for children. It repeals the windfall elimination provision. It ends the 5-month waiting period. It increases benefits by an additional 5 percent for the most elderly. It provides caregiver credits and ends the disability benefit cliff.

How does it do that? It does it by ensuring millionaires and billionaires pay their fair share, and it closes a loophole of avoiding FICA taxes, and it puts an investment income tax only for people making over \$400,000.

This is an amazing bill. It is time we pass Representative JOHN LARSON’s Social Security 2100 Act to preserve Social Security for this generation and generations to come.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. NORCROSS).

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. LARSON for being the voice of Social Security and the voice of the future.

I rise today for almost 150,000 recipients in my district in southern New Jersey, the First District, for those American families who have worked hard, played by the rules, and paid their taxes, as we all do.

For so many Americans, Social Security is all they have at the end of their

career. Since 1935, Social Security has provided stability, security, and protection for America’s seniors. That protection and stability is needed as we stare down that looming retirement security crisis in 2035, literally 100 years since Social Security started.

One in three Americans have less than \$5,000 saved. Fewer workers have access to a pension. Stagnant wages make it harder for people to save. Rarely do I say there is a good side or a bad side because it is usually in the middle. Well, there is no gray here. Social Security is clear. We need to protect it and expand the system that saves seniors or soon-to-be seniors.

Americans expect a future, and they earned a future where they can retire with dignity, and we need to work hard for them. The GOP once again is threatening to cut Social Security for people who don’t have anywhere else to go. The fear that our seniors are going through when you hear about that fiscal commission is nothing short of cruelty. That is why I am proud to be a sponsor of John’s Social Security 2100 Act. I will always fight for those seniors.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, for 40 percent of all Americans on Social Security the only benefit that they receive is Social Security, and that is why the gentleman’s point is so well taken.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS).

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, Mr. LARSON, the ranking member of the Social Security Subcommittee for his leadership on this issue and for organizing this important Special Order to talk about the work that Democrats are doing to protect and expand Social Security and thank him for doing a telephone town hall with me for the people in District One so that they could ask questions about what is happening and how this measure would help.

In my district there are 113,000 Nevadans—that is District One in Las Vegas in Henderson—who rely on Social Security just to make ends meet. It represents the U.S. Government at its very best. In fact, it is one of the most successful programs in our history, and it is vital that we protect it for future generations.

Now, while we are here talking about what the Democrats want to do to protect and expand it, the Republicans, even as we speak, are continuing to threaten Social Security.

Now, Mr. JOHNSON is new at his job of Speaker, but he is not new to this issue. As the former chair of the Republican Study Committee, he repeatedly called for Social Security benefits to be reduced.

In fact, this year’s Republican Study Committee budget would cut benefits by 13 percent and at the same time raise the retirement age to 69, providing seniors with fewer benefits for more work. Raising the retirement age would disproportionately harm low-

and middle-income seniors who rely most heavily on Social Security, forcing them to delay their well-earned retirement often from backbreaking jobs.

Furthermore, the Republicans’ terrible Labor-HHS appropriations bill would cut Social Security funding by 30 percent, closing 240 offices around the country and extending wait times for service.

□ 1715

We cannot let Republicans do this and play games with Social Security. That is why I am very proud to be an original cosponsor of Mr. LARSON’s bill. You have heard the ways that it protects and expands Social Security. We need to bring it up, we need to pass it, and I stand strongly in support of that.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES).

Mrs. TORRES of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative LARSON for bringing us together.

Extremist Republicans are once again pushing to end Social Security as we know it, a critical program that supports 67 million people nationwide, 93,000 of them in my district.

Make no mistake, cutting Social Security will not help the average American, but instead, it will line the pockets of wealthy corporations while seniors and children suffer.

Americans work and pay their entire lives to access Social Security. It is their lifeline. Every single day, Mr. Speaker, I hear from Inland Empire residents asking to protect and expand Social Security.

Just in 2022, when we gave an 8.7 percent COLA increase—which was, by the way, the largest increase since the Reagan era—my constituents were delighted to have this increase.

This is what we must focus on, increasing benefits for the poor citizens that have paid into this program. They are not asking for a handout. They are asking for a program to be reaffirmed, and that is why I support the Social Security 2100 Act.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. WILD).

Ms. WILD. Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that during this Special Order hour on Social Security, it is only Democratic Members of Congress who have volunteered to speak. Heck, this GOP-controlled Congress isn’t getting anything else done, so why don’t we take up Social Security 2100.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of Social Security 2100 and that I have been every single term that I have been here, because I believe that Social Security is a promise. You spend a lifetime working hard and paying into the system so that you can retire with some dignity and security. It is not just something that seniors depend on, it is something that they have earned.

They aren’t getting rich on it. For most, it gives our seniors a bare-bones economic existence, but it is vital to

them. That is why I have made it my mission to protect and strengthen this critical program.

Protecting and strengthening Social Security means standing up to extremist proposals from the GOP, ones that have laid out cuts or privatization proposals that call for sunseting the programs every 5 years and statements that suggest that we “pull Social Security up by the roots and get rid of it.” Outrageous.

The GOP is hell-bent on destroying the only economic security that is available to most of our retirees. That is why we need Social Security 2100. This bill would increase benefits across the board for Social Security beneficiaries and would improve the cost-of-living adjustment formula for keeping up with inflation.

Social Security 2100 would provide a tax cut for working- and middle-class beneficiaries; it would end the waiting period for receiving disability benefits; and it would provide caregiver credits for all of those who have had to take time out of their careers to care for a loved one, and so much more.

It is essential for millions of Americans. In my district, more than 166,800 people depend on Social Security, so I am never going to stop working to protect and strengthen this program.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's time has expired.

Members are reminded to refrain from referencing occupants and guests in the gallery.

Does the gentleman from Connecticut have a motion to adjourn?

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Chair, first I would appeal to your great instincts and patience and thank you for this hour, but we actually have colleagues, at least four, that are here. Over 30 showed up.

Would it be possible to yield them a minute apiece?

I would make a motion to extend the time period to provide our colleagues a minute apiece.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. 1 minute each?

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Yes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair cannot accept a motion to extend time, but Members may ask unanimous consent to address the House for 1 minute.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I move for a 1-minute speech from the remaining four Members.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does any Member wish to be recognized for 1 minute speeches?

SOCIAL SECURITY IS NOT MERELY A GOVERNMENT PROGRAM

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

Ms. PRESSLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman LARSON for his inspired and indefatigable leadership on this critical issue.

As someone who represents nearly 100,000 Social Security beneficiaries in

the Massachusetts 7th and as a co-chair for the Task Force on Aging and Families, I am so proud to be an original cosponsor of your Social Security 2100 Act.

This is a deeply consequential issue that stands to impact individuals from every walk of life—women, children, people of color, veterans, and our seniors—who have the right, who have earned the right, to age in dignity.

Too often they tell me that doing so is becoming more and more difficult. They share their anxieties of living on a fixed income. They are skeptical of the long-term stability of a system they have paid into, paycheck after paycheck, their entire working lives; people like Mrs. Palmer who lives in Boston and wrote my office saying that Social Security is a promise.

I agree. It is not merely a government program. Social Security is a promise to workers, to our elders, to the disabled, a promise to all people who seek to age with dignity. We will keep fighting to keep that promise.

IN SUPPORT OF SOCIAL SECURITY

(Mr. MAGAZINER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MAGAZINER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Social Security 2100 bill, and I thank Representative LARSON for introducing it.

Social Security is a promise. It is a promise that if you work hard and do the right thing and pay into the system during your career, you will be able to retire with dignity in this country.

Unfortunately, too many of my colleagues are obsessed with trying to cut and undermine this vital program. They say there is not enough money in the trust fund, while many of them voted for \$10 trillion of tax cuts that went primarily to the wealthy and to the biggest corporations just a few years ago. They could find \$10 trillion for tax cuts for the people at the top, but then they claim they can't find any money to shore up the Social Security system.

Here is the truth: We can increase cost-of-living adjustments, increase benefits of Social Security, and extend the life of the trust fund indefinitely by just asking the people at the very top to pay their fair share. That is what this bill does. It asks the Elon Musks and Jeff Bezoses of the world to pay a fair share into the trust fund so that working people can retire in dignity.

IN SUPPORT OF SOCIAL SECURITY

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

Ms. MANNING. Mr. Speaker, I rise as a proud cosponsor of the Social Security 2100 Act, a bill that will enhance Social Security benefits for the first time in 50 years and ensure this program's solvency for years to come.

In my district, more than 157,000 retirees and families rely on Social Security as their primary source of income. Social Security doesn't just help retirees. Almost 10,000 children and more than 20,000 disabled workers in my district depend on Social Security to meet their basic expenses.

Social Security was there when my mother-in-law, a stay-at-home mom, was suddenly widowed at 28 years old and left with four young children to raise on her own. Social Security was there to help her get through the tragic loss of her husband and to figure out how to support her young family.

I stand in support of Social Security. I will stand up to any politician who wants to take away or reduce those earned benefits.

A SECRET FISCAL COMMISSION

(Mr. GARAMENDI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing us this opportunity.

Is it really true, Mr. Speaker? Perhaps Mr. LARSON has told me that the Republicans intend to put together some sort of a fiscal commission specifically designed to go after Social Security, to cut the benefits, and to really jeopardize the well-being of seniors now and future seniors? Could that possibly be correct?

Apparently it is. A secret fiscal commission. There is another way of doing it.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. LARSON has put together a proposal that would guarantee Social Security solvency for years to come. It would require that the super wealthy have to pay their fair share.

What is wrong with that? Nothing that I can think of.

We can also actually increase the annual COLA by going to the fair COLA bill which was introduced by—wow, my bill. Mr. LARSON, you have that in your bill. Good for you. Good for the seniors. Good for the future of America.

We can do this correctly, Mr. Speaker, if Mr. LARSON's bill, Social Security 2100, would actually become law.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 5 o'clock and 27 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, January 11, 2024, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Ms. CLARKE of New York (for herself, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mrs. TORRES of