

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, I am certain that U.S. citizens would be furious if they realized that each person pays \$100 each year to the Federal Reserve to rent the paper money we use. Why do we each pay \$100 for the privilege of using Federal Reserve notes when we could use United States Treasury currency with no cost at all? If we issued our paper money the same way that we issue our coins, we could reduce the national debt by \$600 billion and eliminate \$30 billion out of annual payments, interest payments on the Treasury bonds, interest on the U.S. Treasury bonds held by the Federal Reserve supposedly to back the currency.

The Federal Reserve notes we use are technically liabilities of the Fed. It would be easy to fix this badly broken system. Congress need only pass a law declaring that all Federal Reserve notes are officially United States Treasury currency. This would relieve the Fed of all liability for our paper money, and they would then be required to return the bonds that they have held as backing for our currency presently.

We owe it to the citizens of our country to make every effort to reduce this foolish and costly burden.

COMMENDING IDAHO STUDENTS FOR TAKING THE PLEDGE TO SAVE OUR SCHOOLS FROM VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. SIMPSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. Speaker, tragic events often imprint on our minds vivid memories. Most Americans remember exactly where they were when President John F. Kennedy was killed or when the Challenger spaceship exploded. I believe Americans will remember where they were when two high school students in Littleton, Colorado, killed 13 innocent people.

As the Representative for Idaho's Second Congressional District, I clearly remember when I learned of the Columbine massacre. I was voting on a series of bills when a member of my staff pulled me to the television. I watched as students ran out of the school accompanied by SWAT teams. I witnessed a young man breaking a second store library window and falling into a fireman's arms in order to escape the rampage. These images will haunt America forever.

Unfortunately, school violence is too common today. In 1940, public school teachers ranked the top seven disciplinary problems in public schools. They were talking out of turn, chewing gum, making noise, running in the hall, cutting in line, dress code violations and littering. In 1990, the problems had changed to drug and alcohol abuse, pregnancy, suicide, rape, robbery and assault. In the last 12 months alone the number of children bringing weapons to schools in Idaho is up more than 25

percent. Our problems have changed significantly and so must our solutions.

After the Columbine tragedy, I decided a dialogue must begin on the local level to bring about positive change rather than focusing on Federal legislation. I organized three town hall meetings in my district called Saving Our Schools, or SOS meetings. I invited the student body presidents to participate in a panel about school violence. Each president from the surrounding schools also signed an antiviolence pledge that they took back to their high schools.

Today, it is my pleasure to report that more than 5,000 students from over 40 Idaho high schools in my district took the pledge. The pledge reads: "I pledge to keep my school and community safe by never using violence to solve my disagreements and taking personal responsibility for my actions." Some of those Idaho high schools include Aberdeen High School, Blackfoot High School from which I graduated, Buhl, Burley, Butte, Castleford, Firth, and on and on.

The maturity and perception of the students during the town hall meetings and assemblies impressed me. Idaho holds top-notch students who care about their schools. School violence is not going away, and there is not just one answer. But my hope is that schools and communities will look for answers tailored to their needs to ensure schools are places of learning, not of fear.

I encourage my colleagues to initiate similar dialogues with the students, parents and school officials in the communities of their districts before tragedy strikes, not after. As we begin another school year, I hope my House colleagues will urge the students in their districts to take the pledge against violence in our Nation's schools.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FILNER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, on April 12, I led an hour of debate of prescription drug coverage for senior citizens. I read three letters from around the state from seniors who shared their personal stories. On the 12th, I made a commitment to continue to read a different letter every week until the House enacts reform. That was six months ago. Although the House passed a prescription drug bill this summer, I believe it will not help most seniors. So, I will continue to read letters until Congress enacts a real Medicare prescription drug benefit. This week, I will read a letter from Harriet Simmons of Detroit, Michigan.

Text of the letter:

Dear Congresswoman STABENOW: I am writing to express my concern over the escalating cost of prescription drugs for seniors. As a senior myself, I must take the medicines prescribed by my doctor to maintain my health. The cost of these drugs can rise from month to month. Sometimes, I have had to purchase half of my medicine or take less so it will last longer.

The Michigan Emergency Pharmaceutical Program for Seniors provides temporary help for 3 months out of the year if you qualify. But, what are we to do the remaining 9 months? Many seniors are too young or just above the income guidelines to qualify. We need help in obtaining our prescriptions for the above cited reasons. I support your efforts to lower the cost of drugs for seniors.

I would like to add: We are senior citizens today but yesterday we were active, tax paying citizens. Don't mistreat us now. We need protection.

Sincerely,

HARRIETT SIMMONS.

Harriet deserves a genuine Medicare prescription drug benefit. Time is running out to do something in this Congress. We must enact real prescription drug reform before we adjourn.

SOCIAL SECURITY SOLVENCY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, this is good news, I think, for people that are concerned with Social Security. Social Security is one of America's most important programs. I think we have missed a great opportunity in the last 8 years not to develop the kind of policy changes in Social Security that will for sure keep it solvent. Now it is part of the great debate, and I think it is important that we all understand a little better how the Social Security program works. Social Security benefits are a guaranteed act; and the fact is, is that there is going not to be enough money coming in from the payroll tax to pay benefits without some changes. The big change is a better return on the investments.

When Franklin Roosevelt created the Social Security program over 6 decades ago, he wanted it to feature a private sector component to build retirement income. Social Security was supposed to be one leg of a three-legged stool to support retirees. It was supposed to go hand in hand with personal savings and private pension plans. Of course, when it passed through the Senate, it is interesting. The Senate on two votes back in 1935 said that it had to be optional investments so individuals could invest their own money. Provisions were put into that law so that certain States and counties would be allowed to have alternative private investment plans, and now we are seeing counties in Texas and around the country that opted out of Social Security getting four or five, six, 10 times as much benefits from their pension retirement plans that they own as opposed to what Social Security would pay.

The biggest risk is doing nothing at all in Social Security. One thing I am concerned about is President Clinton and Vice President GORE have suggested that we simply add huge, giant IOUs to the Social Security trust fund. The problem with that is that the full faith and credit of this country is good, but the way we pay back Treasury notes now is simply to borrow more money. If we are going to borrow \$20 trillion, it is going to tremendously change the economics of this country.

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Social Security has a total unfunded liability of over \$20 trillion. The Social Security trust fund contains nothing but IOUs. That means you have to either borrow the money to pay it back, increase taxes to pay it back, or you have to reduce benefits. We have to have two things very clear: No increase in taxes, and no reduction in benefits for existing or near-term retirees.

To keep paying the promised Social Security benefits, the payroll tax will have to be increased at least 50 percent of total income or benefits will have to be cut by one-third. Neither of those options are good.

In conclusion, this is the demonstrated problem of Social Security. We are in a short range up to for the next 12 to 15 years of a little more money coming in in the Social Security payroll tax than is needed to pay benefits. But then look what happens in the out years. Twenty trillion, in today's dollars, but in those dollars that are going to have to be paid out over and above what is coming in from the Social Security tax 50 or 60 years from now, it is going to be 120 trillion of those inflated future year dollars. Huge problems. It needs to be dealt with now. We have to get a better return on the investment.

The six principles of saving Social Security that I and Senator ROD GRAMS have come up with are: Protect the current and future beneficiaries; allow freedom of choice; preserve the safety net; make Americans better off, not worse off; create a fully funded system; and no increase in taxes.

Right now the average American worker pays more in the payroll FICA tax than in the income tax. Seventy-eight percent of American workers pay more in the FICA tax than they do the income tax. Let us not increase taxes on them again. Let us do something now, so we do not pass this burden on to our kids and grandkids.

RYAN WHITE CARE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. QUINN). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to be able to rise and support S. 2311, the reauthorization of the Ryan White CARE Act. This legislation needed to come to the

floor before the end of the 106th Congress. It is imperative that we continue the fight for treatment dollars to deal with those who are HIV infected and those who are affected.

Thanks to the efforts of collaboration, this legislation provides a funding formula that will actually ensure that all Americans suffering from this devastating disease are properly covered. In particular, it will work to enhance some of the devastated areas in African-American areas and Hispanic areas to provide resources for those communities.

The legislation maintains the integrity of the multi-structure of the CARE Act, allowing funds to be targeted to the areas hardest hit by the HIV and AIDS epidemic. In addition, I am pleased that the legislation maintains and, in fact, strengthens the decision-making authority of local planning councils and allows resources to be used to locate and bring more individuals into the health care system.

I am also delighted to learn that the bill will provide more individuals with early intervention services, such as counseling and testing. This is particularly important in the 18th Congressional District, where many faith-based organizations, nonprofits, are now realizing the importance of education and prevention and speaking the cultural language of the different unique communities that need to understand the dangers of not having knowledge about HIV and AIDS.

This bill, that I have supported in years past and am delighted to extend my support, extends Medicare coverage to people living with HIV. Under this legislation adopted now, States will have the ability to add poor and low-income uninsured persons living with HIV to the list of persons categorically eligible for Medicaid.

This is very important for people in the 18th Congressional District here in Houston for getting proper coverage, and it is very critical that they receive the kind of quality care that is necessary. There are HIV-infected persons in my district and across America that need some relief immediately, and thus the Medicaid provision is imperative.

Under current rules, most people living with HIV are ineligible for Medicaid until they have progressed to AIDS and are disabled. We wanted to engage individuals who are infected so they can have the proper care and treatment. We know with the new health care revolutions and the new drug treatments that have come about, it is very important to have early intervention so that these individuals can live full, active lives. New treatments, such as the highly active heart therapy, are successfully delaying the progression of HIV progression to AIDS.

Mr. Speaker, this is very exciting. We can turn this situation around. Early access to HIV treatment is imperative. I remember coming to this Congress in the early 1990s or in 1990 as a local

elected official to join with Senator KENNEDY as he introduced the Ryan White treatment dollars.

This reauthorization is a testimony that it works, that treatment works, and now we must focus on prevention. I believe the legislation must be signed by the President. The formula will add to people's lives; it will in fact save lives. I am very delighted to support this legislation, and I look forward to it being signed by the President so that it can save lives, not only in Texas and in my district, but throughout this Nation, as we continue to fight the AIDS epidemic throughout the world.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MICA addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CONGRESS RESTORES THE UPARR PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week the House passed the Department of Interior appropriations conference report for the year 2001 by an overwhelming margin. Many of the votes for that legislation were the result of an historic commitment of funds to efforts to preserve our national resources, including parks and other public lands, wildlife, endangered species, forest programs and others.

We are providing this support through a new \$1.6 billion Lands fund because of the severe underfunding of resource programs over the past decade that have led to a deterioration of the environment and the recreational opportunities for tens of millions of Americans who treasure their national parks, wilderness areas, coasts and other public lands.

No program has been more unjustifiably undermined than the Urban Parks and Recreation Program known as UPARR.

UPARR is a vital program that provides on a matching basis relatively small grants to towns and cities throughout America to try and provide some expanded recreational opportunities to children who have very few alternative recreational opportunities. Across this country, there are dozens of towns and cities where baseball fields are overgrown, soccer fields are short of equipment, gyms and courts are unusable, and every day tens of thousands of children pass by those vacant and useless playgrounds and gyms and have to find something to do after school and in their evening hours. These are the children who fall prey to crime and drugs and gangs and inappropriate sexual activity that place