

under way. But what good is a national dialogue if the participants do not have all the information they need to participate in an informed and meaningful debate? Today I am offering legislation to help foster a genuine dialogue about Social Security. As we thoughtfully look at ways of personalizing and modernizing our current system, we need to ensure that the discussion is a careful one, and we need to include those most affected by the program—current beneficiaries. My legislation will help educate seniors about their status in the current system by providing them information about their current benefits. As the Ways and Means Committee today holds a hearing on a proposal to conduct a National Dialogue on Social Security in 1998, my legislation is designed to build on this idea by helping Americans understand the problem this system faces and design a long-range program to modernize Social Security.

This legislation is a sunshine bill, much like my pilot program enacted into law in the 104th Congress. It is designed to assist seniors better understand their contributions and benefits under the social security system. *Beginning January 1, 1999, beneficiaries of Social Security will receive two annual statements detailing: (1) The total wages and self-employment income the individual has earned; (2) the total contributions of the employer, employee and self-employment from wages; (3) the total amount paid to the individual as benefits, and; (4) an explanation of the statement in easily understood terms.*

Numerous seniors in my district find it ironic that other retirement benefit programs like mutual funds, IRAs and the like, provide this type of information, in writing, on a quarterly basis—and many provide participants direct 24-hour access by telephone. My bill would require that the Social Security Administration provide reasonable information in a reasonable timeframe.

As we know, Social Security is an unfunded pay-as-you-go system. Today's benefits to the elderly are paid by today's taxes from the young. Recently, the government's own actuaries reported that Social Security's Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Disability Trust Funds will go broke in 2030. By that time, payroll taxes on fewer than two workers will support each retiree, a sharp decline from 1980 when the ratio was 3.5 to 1—and an even further decline from 1950 when the ratio was 16 to 1. This will occur as a result of demographic factors in the system and is not the fault of seniors.

Short-term fixes of the past to increase revenue or reduce benefits will be unsuccessful in postponing insolvency. Furthermore, the Social Security Administration's own pessimistic estimates indicate that by 2040 a combined employer-employee payroll tax of 40 percent could be required to pay benefits. Raising the already burdensome payroll tax for the 18th time in the history of the program is simply not an option.

Unfortunately, many seniors, including my own mother, are not aware of the state of the system or the impending crisis. The lack of information provided to them and every other senior is simply unacceptable. Seniors across the country have a desire—indeed, a right—to know about the status of their participation in the Social Security system. My bill would guarantee seniors access to this important information and include them in our national dia-

logue. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

IN HONOR OF IRENE SILLIMAN

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

STEVE C. LaTOURETTE

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, my colleague Mr. LaTOURETTE, and I rise today to honor a woman who is truly dedicated to our nation's troops, Irene Silliman. Mrs. Silliman is a harbinger of goodwill and warmth to the United States Navy, providing them with slippers to keep them warm on the decks of their cold ships.

A 72-year-old grandmother from Madison, OH, Irene Silliman started what has turned in to a national project by providing hand-knitted slipper socks to sailors on her grandson's vessel. After receiving a letter from her grandson requesting a pair of the socks, Silliman determined that she would make extra pairs for his shipmates. She organized a group of friends and began a phenomenon called "Operation Toasty Toes" that has engulfed the senior population of Northeast Ohio.

After receiving several calls from interested volunteers, Silliman spearheaded an effort to make these Toasty Toes slipper socks for the entire crew of the U.S.S. *Carney*, the destroyer on which her grandson is stationed. National newspapers have picked up the story and a multitude of citizens nationwide are now feverishly working on new pairs of slippers to send to the troops.

Irene Silliman is truly devoted to her country and the well-being of our servicemen and women. Her selfless effort to organize a crusade to provide warmth and comfort to our soldiers is truly a testament of her patriotic spirit. Mrs. Silliman wished to show our American troops that she and others cared about them and through their efforts, this has been accomplished.

My fellow colleagues, join me in saluting a true patriot whose selfless devotion to our American troops is evident through her efforts, Irene Silliman.

SALUTING CEASAR CHAVEZ

HON. KAREN MCCARTHY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor today to rise and salute one of the most inspirational leaders of our country, Cesar Chavez. Cesar Chavez is a legend within the Latino community and our nation. He is one of my heroes as well. This past Saturday, March 28, 1998, I had the pleasure of participating in a street dedication ceremony renaming a street in the predominantly Hispanic community on the west side of Kansas City in my Congressional District, Avenida Cesar Chavez. The festive atmosphere of the ceremony was enhanced by the presence of Richard Chavez, Cesar's younger brother,

who has continued the work which Cesar started to benefit all working men and women. Visiting with Richard and listening to his experiences demonstrated the extraordinary nature which one, and later many, dedicated individuals can have on bettering our community and nation.

In 1962, when Cesar Chavez founded the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA), his purpose was to unite all of the Mexican farm workers in California in their struggle for better wages and working conditions.

Cesar Chavez was a very charismatic leader, who headed a movement that used only nonviolent tactics. Cesar Chavez used strikes and boycotts as leverage in applying economic pressure on the employers to settle wage disputes and improve the work environment.

Cesar Chavez was a visionary who built consensus. He realized that the existence of oppression towards any group of people was wrong, so he joined the fight to help further the cause for Filipino farm workers. In 1965, during the Grape Boycotts, Filipino and Mexican workers united and protested the low wages and poor working conditions. In 1970 this remarkable effort resulted in an amicable resolution. For nearly a decade like many of my generation, I refused to consume grapes to show solidarity.

Muchas gracias otra vez por permitirme esta oportunidad compartir mi sentimiento sobre un grand heroe Americano, Cesar Chavez.

Mr. Speaker, I salute and applaud the efforts of Cesar Chavez and the community leaders in my Congressional District who have the vision to ensure that his memory and works will permanently be remembered for future generations, not only through the dedication of Avenida Cesar Chavez, but by the historical translation passed on from generation to generation.

IN RECOGNITION OF CARIBBEAN
THEATRE WEEK APRIL 5-12, 1998

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the inaugural celebration of Caribbean Theatre Week. This unique week was made possible through the diligent efforts of persons at the Daily Challenge, and WLIB Radio, special community leaders and performers who have tirelessly committed themselves to developing events that celebrate the entire spectrum of Caribbean creativity. Caribbean Theatre Week, which will be held in New York on April 5-12, 1998, is a magnificent forum for presenting the significant artistic contributions made by Caribbean performers.

In reviewing the history of the Caribbean, one can ascertain the importance of theatrical production in the Caribbean region. The advent of the Caribbean theatre contributed to the increase in national independence in the Caribbean islands. The theatre often served as a powerful tool for political communication that both defined and reflected the island's culture and identity.

Caribbean Theatre Week is the brainchild of Mr. Dawad Philip, a poet, artist, and editor of