will continue this by supporting further recruitment, coordination and educational activities.

However, if there is one thing we can agree on above all else, it is the fact that without continuing to increase the numbers of minority donors on the Registry, patients of these groups will continue to face a greater difficulty in finding a matched unrelated donor. For this reason, H.R. 2202 places a special emphasis on the need to increase potential donors of racial and ethnic minority heritage and makes this the priority of the program's recruitment efforts.

We have also learned a lot about the needs of patients and their families as they face the challenge of finding an unrelated donor match for their loved one. H.R. 2202 formally establishes an Office of Patient Advocacy and Case Management within the program to provide individualized services for patients requesting assistance. The office will provide information and coordinate all aspects of the search and transplantation process to ensure the needs of the patient are being met. While much of this work is already being done by an office within the program, H.R. 2202 builds on these efforts by codifying the office and granting it additional authority recommended by the Senate in legislation approved by that body in 1996.

My wife Beverly and I have met with and befriended hundreds of donors, patients, and their families from all over our nation. To each of these patients, I promise that I will continue to do all that I can to ensure that they have the best possible chance to find a donor. Unfortunately, some of these families never found a donor before it was too late. Many others, however, found their miracle match and they are alive and doing well today because of the living medical miracle that is this national registry.

There is nothing I have done in public service that I am more proud of than establishing the National Marrow Donor Program. Every member of Congress should share that pride as they are a part of a great federal program that works. The measure of this program's value is the lives it saves throughout our nation and throughout our world. As we continue to increase the number of life-saving transplants that take place each year, we know that our work is not yet finished and that there are more lives to save. In making tough budgetary decisions, Congress must measure the value of each and every program to the American taxpayer. With that as our test, their can be no disputing the success of the National Marrow Donor Program because there is no higher priority then giving someone back their life.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Congress' strong support for this program and for my legislation that will enable us to continue on with our life-saving work for the next five years. That commitment to this program is evident from the special joint House-Senate hearing recently held and by the willingness to work together, House and Senate, to expedite the passage and enactment of H.R. 2202. On behalf of all those donors and patients still awaiting their opportunity to unite in the most special of ways, I say thank you to all my colleagues. And on behalf of those families who will experience the second chance to enjoy their life with a child, with a husband or wife, or with a brother or sister, I say thank you for being one of the countless heroes throughout the short history of this program. Together, day after day, we will continue to give the most precious gift of all, here and abroad, the living gift of life.

THE SENIOR CITIZENS' FREEDOM TO WORK BILL

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 20, 1998

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation that will eliminate the so-called ''Social Security Earnings Test.'' Under current law, our senior citizens aged 65–69 can earn only $14,500 before they lose $1 in Social Security benefits for each additional $3 of earnings. This test is unfair, discriminatory, and adversely affects our country's economy. The Social Security Earnings Test must be eliminated.

The Social Security Earnings Test is unfair and inappropriate because it imposes a form of a ''means'' test for a retirement benefit. As we all know, Social Security benefits have been earned by a lifetime of contributions to the program. American workers have been led to regard Social Security as a government-run savings plan. Indeed, their acceptance of the 12.4 percent Social Security payroll tax has been predicated on the belief that they will get their money back at retirement age. Thus, most Americans do not accept the rationale that the return of their money should be decreased just because they continue to work.

Additionally, the Social Security Earnings Test discriminates against senior citizens who must work in order to supplement their benefits. Currently, income from investments does not affect the amount of Social Security benefits that a senior citizen receives. It simply does not make any sense to treat less favorably income from work than income from investments. Clearly, the Social Security Earnings Test is inequitable to our nation's senior citizens who are in the greatest need of additional income.

The Social Security Earnings Test also negatively affects work incentives. The disincentive effect is magnified when viewed on an after-tax basis. Senior citizens who work lose a large percentage of their Social Security benefits due to the Social Security Earnings Test, but they must also continue to pay Social Security taxes, and probably federal and state income taxes as well. The Social Security Earnings Test forces senior citizens to avoid work, to seek lower paying or part-time work or to seek payment ''under the table.''

In addition to being complicated and difficult for the individual senior citizen to understand, the Social Security Earnings Test is complex and costly for the Government to administer. For example, the test is responsible for more than one-half of retirement and survivor program overpayments. Elimination of the Earnings Test would help minimize administration expenses, and recipients would be less confused and less tempted to cheat on reporting their earnings.

Finally, repealing the Social Security Earnings Test would greatly aid our country's economy. Our senior citizens would be likely to work more and the American economy would benefit from their experience and skills. The combined increase in the amounts that they would pay in Social Security and other taxes, as well as the additional contribution to our Gross National Product, would largely offset the increase in benefit payments. For decades, our senior citizens worked and dutifully paid their Social Security taxes, it is only fair that they fully receive their Social Security benefits when they are at the retirement age.

H.R.—

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act of 1998''.

SEC. 2. ELIMINATION OF EARNINGS TEST FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE ATTAINED RETIREMENT AGE.

Section 203 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 403) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c)(1), by striking ''the age of seventy'' and inserting ''retirement age (as defined in section 216(l))'';

(2) in paragraphs (1)(A) and (2) of subsection (d), by striking ''the age of seventy'' each place it appears and inserting ''retirement age (as defined in section 216(l))'';

(3) in subsection (f)(1)(B), by striking ''was age seventy or over'' and inserting ''was at or above retirement age (as defined in section 216(l))'';

(4) in subsection (f)(3)—

(A) by striking ''33⅓ percent'' and all that follows through ''any other individual,'' and inserting ''50 percent of such individual's earnings for such year in excess of the product of the exempt amount as determined under paragraph (8),''; and

(B) by striking ''age 70'' and inserting ''retirement age (as defined in section 216(l))'';

(5) in subsection (h)(1)(A), by striking ''age 70'' each place it appears and inserting ''retirement age (as defined in section 216(l))''; and

(6) in subsection (j)—

(A) in the heading, by striking ''Age Seventy'' and inserting ''Retirement Age''; and

(B) by striking ''seventy years of age'' and inserting ''having attained retirement age (as defined in section 216(l))''.

SEC. 3. CONFORMING AMENDMENTS ELIMINATING THE SPECIAL EXEMPT AMOUNT FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE ATTAINED RETIREMENT AGE.

(a) UNIFORM EXEMPT AMOUNT.—Section 203(f)(8)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 403(f)(8)(A)) is amended by striking ''the new exempt amounts (separately stated for individuals described in subparagraph (D) and for other individuals) which are to be applicable'' and inserting ''a new exempt amount which shall be applicable''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 203(f)(8)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 403(f)(8)(B)) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''Except'' and all that follows through ''whichever'' and inserting ''The exempt amount which is applicable for each month of a particular taxable year shall be whichever'';

(2) in clauses (i) and (ii), by striking ''corresponding'' each place it appears; and

(3) in the last sentence, by striking ''an exempt amount'' and inserting ''the exempt amount''.

(c) REPEAL OF BASIS FOR COMPUTATION OF SPECIAL EXEMPT AMOUNT.—Section 203(f)(8)(D) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. (f)(8)(D)) is repealed.

SEC. 4. ADDITIONAL CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.

(a) ELIMINATION OF REDUNDANT REFERENCES TO RETIREMENT AGE.—Section 203 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 403) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c), in the last sentence, by striking ''nor shall any deduction'' and

all that follows and inserting ''nor shall any deduction be made under this subsection from any widow's or widower's insurance benefit if the widow, surviving divorced wife, widower, or surviving divorced husband involved became entitled to such benefit prior to attaining age 60.''; and

(2) in subsection (f)(1), by striking clause (D) and inserting the following: ''(D) for which such individual is entitled to widow's or widower's insurance benefits if such individual became so entitled prior to attaining age 60,''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT TO PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING AMOUNT OF INCREASE ON ACCOUNT OF DELAYED RETIREMENT.—Section 202(w)(2)(B)(ii) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 402(w)(2)(B)(ii)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''either''; and

(2) by striking ''or suffered deductions under section 203(b) or 203(c) in amounts equal to the amount of such benefit''.

(c) PROVISIONS RELATING TO EARNINGS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN DETERMINING SUBSTANTIAL GAINFUL ACTIVITY OF BLIND INDIVIDUALS.—The second sentence of section 223(d)(4) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 423(d)(4)) is amended by striking ''if section 102 of the Senior Citizens' Right to Work Act of 1996 had not been enacted'' and inserting the following: ''if the amendments to section 203 made by section 102 of the Senior Citizens' Right to Work Act of 1996 and by the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act of 1998 had not been enacted''.

SEC. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The amendments and repeals made by this Act shall apply with respect to taxable years ending after December 31, 1997.

THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MINE HILL, MORRIS COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 20, 1998

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the people of the Township of Mine Hill, New Jersey as they commemorate the 75th anniversary of the incorporation of their community.

In the early years, Mine Hill centered around a diverse history of rich iron ore veins and active mining operations. The Delaware Indians, known as the Lenni Lenape were aware of the iron outcroppings and named the area Succasunny meaning ''black stone''. The settlers realized the potential and developed the ''black stone'' into a profitable commodity. Some of the mines date back to the Revolutionary War when iron ore was provided to nearby forges.

Because the iron ore was one of the finest quality and in such great abundance, mining, not farming became the primary industry in the area. This led to the development of the Village of Mine Hill. Mine Hill is also known for the Dickerson Mine, named after Governor Mahlon Dickerson, a resident of Mine Hill and Governor of New Jersey from 1815 to 1817. The Dickerson Mine was the first and oldest iron mine in the state.

The Township of Mine Hill is a small community of approximately 2.95 square miles, located in central Morris County. In 1993, this quiet community was recognized by the Federal government as having one of the best elementary schools in the country. The Canfield Avenue School was named a Blue Ribbon School which means that it placed in the top 200 schools in the Untied States in quality of education.

Once a prominent iron mining community, Mine Hill has kept its small town American identity. The 75th anniversary of Mine Hill's incorporation is a great achievement. It is a time for celebration and reflection for the residents.

Mr. Speaker, my fellow colleagues, please join me in congratulating the Township of Mine Hill Township on this important milestone.

IN OPPOSITION TO RIGGS AMENDMENT TO H.R. 6

HON. VINCE SNOWBARGER

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 20, 1998

Mr. SNOWBARGER. Mr. Chairman, I rise to explain my opposition to the Riggs Amendment to H.R. 6, the Higher Education Amendments of 1998.

The principal purpose of our important civil rights reforms, now more than thirty years old, was to help eradicate systematic and structural racism. Our hope was to keep the government and its agents from treating people differently because of their race or ethnicity. As Martin Luther King, Jr. said the law cannot make us love one another. We can, however, work together to ensure that, at the very least, our government sees its citizens as individuals. Each one is unique and worthy of respect.

Affirmative action, which originally meant ensuring that all should have the opportunity to compete on their merits, has now become a persistent challenge to these principles of fairness. If our government, through quotas and set-asides, continues to treat Americans differently because of their race or ethnicity, it becomes even harder to eliminate racism wherever it festers.

The amendment to the Higher Education Act Reauthorization offered by Representative FRANK RIGGS was mostly consistent with these principles of fairness and equal opportunity for all. Representative RIGGS' amendment would have prohibited preferential admissions treatment based in whole or in part on the race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin of applicants by institutions of higher education. A special exemption was included in the amendment to exempt preferential treatment on the basis of affiliation with an Indian tribe by any tribally controlled college.

I opposed the amendment because I was concerned that Haskell Indian Nations University, which is located in my district, would be adversely affected by the amendment. Haskell Indian Nations University is the only federally owned and operated four-year institution for Native Americans in the country. Because the University is controlled by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and not by a tribe, I felt that it would not qualify for the exemption included in the Riggs amendment.

Additionally, I opposed this amendment because I believe that we must seek to end policies that discriminate. This cannot be done in a piecemeal fashion. We must reach out to all groups to ensure that all Americans have equal access to opportunities. Quotas and set-asides undermine our effort to secure this for everyone.

For these reasons, I opposed the amendment.

NORMAN THOMAS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 20, 1998

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the generous efforts of 560 Norman Thomas Elementary School students and staff in Freer, Texas, to collect thousands of cans and boxes of food for the Freer Food Bank. The school's venture helped stock the pantries of 70 neighbors in desperate need of food.

This good deed is especially remarkable because about two-thirds of the Norman Thomas Elementary School students qualify for free or reduced school lunches. Despite the personal challenges many of these students face they saw a need to help those less fortunate than themselves and learned a very valuable lesson while volunteering in their community.

For their efforts the school was recognized with a community award by the USA Weekend magazine sponsored by Make a Difference Day. The students and staff at Norman Thomas Elementary School have made a difference which will help feed people in their community. Volunteering in one's community sets a high standard for better living. And such a young group of individuals accomplishing community goals means Freer, Texas, will look forward to a fruitful future.

''MY VOICE IN OUR DEMOCRACY''

HON. NEIL ABERCROMBIE

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 20, 1998

Mr. ABERCROMBIE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend Zachary Hicks, a student at Hawaii Baptist Academy in Honolulu, who recently won the 1998 Voice of Democracy broadcast scriptwriting contest for Hawaii.

Each year, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Ladies Auxiliary sponsor the Voice of Democracy contest to recognize writing and oratorical skills of students. Zachary Hicks related the democracy demonstrations of Tianamen Square in the People's Republic of China to the freedoms to enjoy and the need to exercise freedom of speech.

I would like to share the script with the House and America, Mr. Speaker, which I am submitting. I am certain Leon and Brenda Hicks, Zac's parents, as well as his teachers and fellow students at Hawaii Baptist Academy, have great pride in Zac and his accomplishment.

''MY VOICE IN OUR DEMOCRACY''

(By Zachary Hicks)

Not long ago, a number of young men and women broke out in protest of a government they did not believe in. With fear overpowered by conviction, these students stared communism in the face and said, ''We will no longer be shut up, pushed down, and unheard.'' That night in Tianamen Square, the cries for a democracy rang out loud and