the competitive spirits of those in the Atlantic time zone aroused. But when information is being sent out about changes in national time or announcements concerning time, this ninth time zone, in geography going west but first in terms of time, frequently gets ignored. After all, the existing law only allows for eight time zones under the American flag.

Consequently, Madam Speaker, I am introducing today a bill which fills the void, which corrects this oversight, and which appropriately designates each and every American time zone. If all Americans count, then all Americans should be included in time, in political participation, and in the national census. Each and every time we look at the clock or look at our watch, we should recognize that there exists nine time zones.

□ 1245

The unique feature of this particular piece of legislation is that it is responsive to a quandary that does not quite exist in the other time zones. We have two jurisdictions with two distinct names. We have Guam and we have the Northern Marianas. We could call it the Guam slash or dash Marianas time zone. However, in time, Guam would take center stage and the remainder of the Marianas would be ignored. Or we could call it the Marianas time zone, but that would be taken as a signal that Guam is not included.

Therefore, in honor of the historical unity of both Guam and the Northern Marianas and the people who were the original inhabitants of the entire island chain, I have designated in this legislation this new time zone as Chamorro Standard Time. The word ''Chamorro'' refers to the indigenous people, possesses a proud cultural heritage, and forms the basis of the underlying historical and cultural connection between the people of Guam and the people of Luta, Tinian, Saipan, Agrigan, and other islands in the Northern Marianas.

ManChamorro ham todu gi tinituhon. We were Chamorros in the beginning.

ManChamorro ham esta pa'go. We are still Chamorros today.

This amendment to the Calder Act has been discussed with Federal officials in NIST of the Department of Commerce, and we anticipate only support for this effort.

Madam Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to cosponsor and pass this legislation quickly, dare I say it, in a timely way. Let us not waste any time. Let us take the time to make time for all Americans.

ELIMINATION OF MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELLER. Madam Speaker, today is a big day. The House Committee on Ways and Means is going to act on another item on our agenda, an issue of fairness; and today, in the House Committee on Ways and Means, we are going to move forward on an item on the Republican agenda which helps 800,000 senior citizens, senior citizens over the age of 65, who because they need to work or want to work, they want to be active longer, or maybe they have two pensions, had their Social Security benefits taxed away. And that is called the earnings limit, or the earnings penalty.

Today we are going to pass legislation which will wipe out that unfair quirk in Federal law which taxes away two-thirds of the Social Security benefits of 800,000 senior citizen who happen to earn more than $17,000 a year.

We can all think of seniors that we know in our local communities who have to work, maybe they are waitresses, maybe they work or have a little hobby or they set aside some money and saved and invested well that they are making more than $17,000 a year, and today they are punished; they are penalized.

We are going to pass legislation which deserves bipartisan support which wipes out the earnings limit for 800,000 senior citizens. That is a big victory as we work to bring about fairness to every American.

Today I want to talk about another issue of fairness, an issue which this House has voted to address, an issue which responds to a fundamental question of fairness, the difference between right and wrong; and that is, is it right, is it fair that under our Tax Code 25 million married working couples on average pay $1,400 more in higher taxes just because they are married?

Is it right that a working married couple with an identical income, identical circumstances, pays higher taxes than a couple that lives together outside of marriage with identical circumstances? Of course not. It is wrong; it is unfair that under our Tax Code a working married couple pays more in taxes just because they are married.

I want to introduce to my colleagues in the House Shad and Michelle Hallihan, two public school teachers from Joliet, Illinois. Shad and Michelle, of course, teach public school; they just had a little baby, a young couple, a nice couple. They suffer the marriage tax penalty just because they are married.

They have a combined income of about $62,000. They are two public school teachers supposed to have identical incomes of about $30,000 each. They are middle class. Well, they pay the average marriage tax penalty.

Michelle pointed out to me, she said, Congressman, as you work to eliminate that marriage tax penalty, let your colleagues in the Congress know that that marriage tax penalty that the Hallihans pay would buy about 4,000 diapers for their newborn child.

It is real money for real people. And for other families in Joliet, Illinois, the hometown of Michelle and Shad Hallihan, that $1,400, the average marriage tax penalty, is 1 year's tuition at Joliet Junior College or a local community college. It is 3 months' of daycare at a local childcare center in the south suburbs of Chicago. It is 7 months' worth of car payments. It is a washer and a dryer for couples like Michelle and Shad. And they are a beautiful couple. They are young.

But the marriage tax penalty is suffered by the elderly, as well. We have all heard the stories about elderly couples who get divorced because they can save money. Well, the marriage tax penalty punishes young and old just because they are married. And this House has done something about that. We have been working over the last several years to wipe out the marriage tax penalty. And 230 Members of this House joined together to cosponsor H.R. 6, the Marriage Tax Elimination Act, legislation which wipes out the marriage tax penalty for couples like Michelle and Shad Hallihan.

I am proud to say that this House voted, in fact 48 Democrats joined with every House Republican to vote to wipe out the marriage tax penalty, benefiting 25 million married, working couples who suffer the marriage tax penalty.

Our legislation will essentially wipe out the marriage tax penalty for Shad and Michelle Hallihan. We do it in several ways. It has three key components. It is legislation designed to help everybody who suffers the marriage tax penalty, and we do it in three approaches.

One is, first we help the working poor. Those who participate in the earned income credit, which helps those working poor families, particularly with children, well, there is a marriage penalty and we adjust the income threshold so that working, married couples who participate in earned income credit will see their marriage penalty eliminated.

Let us remember that the biggest part of the marriage tax penalty is caused when we have a husband and wife like Shad and Michelle Hallihan, who, because they are married, they file jointly, they combine their income. We eliminate the marriage tax penalty by widening the 15 percent tax bracket as well as doubling the standard deduction.

The Senate needs to act. I hope the Senate will join us and move in a quick way, a timely way, and in a bipartisan way to join us in wiping out the marriage tax penalty.

IMPROVING BUDGET PROCESS—KEEPING SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICAID SOLVENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized