Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Leon Brachman, one of Fort Worth, Texas’ finest sons, in honor of his upcoming 80th birthday.

While he was born and raised in Marietta, OH, Mr. Brachman moved to Fort Worth in 1938. He married a Fort Worth girl from an old Fort Worth family and never left.

Mr. Brachman has served his adopted city in almost every civic capacity imaginable. In his service as a founder of the Fort Worth Symphony and the Fort Worth Chamber Music Society, an original board member of the Van Cliburn Quadrennial Piano Competition, and president of Casa Manana, he has shown his profound love of culture and his belief that all should be able to share in its beauty. By his decades long service as the treasurer, president, and chairman of the board of All Saints Hospital, as well as his chairmanship of the Steering Committee of the Public Health School of the University of North Texas, Health Science Center, Fort Worth, he has shown his devotion to the provision of quality health care to all citizens of our community. As the chairman of the Tarrant County Appraisal District, he devoted countless hours ensuring that Fort Worth and Tarrant County raised their required revenues in a way that was fair to all of its citizens.

To the Jewish community of our city and our entire country, Mr. Brachman has served in virtually every possible leadership role, giving of his time and his resources to keep their institutions strong, their communal needs met, their self-reliance vital. Having served as a vice chairman of the United Jewish Appeal, the president of Ahavath Sholom Synagogue, founder and president of the Hebrew Day School of Fort Worth, and countless other Jewish communal roles, each institution has been positively influenced by his involvement.

Whenever the community has called upon him, Mr. Brachman has never hesitated to take on the most thankless tasks. Wherever there has been an institution in a seemingly hopeless situation, his presence and his efforts have rekindled hope.

It is important that the House of Representatives acknowledge and be thankful for the spirit of community responsibility embodied by Mr. Brachman. His life’s work to make our world a better place demonstrates the best our country has to offer.
growth in the number of applicants and beneficiaries with the aging and eventual retirement of the Baby Boomers. So much work remains in the area of simplifying the application process, which will benefit applicants, SSA, and ultimately taxpayers. For now, though, a good start would be finding a better way to pay claimants, and I would encourage and help process this workload as quickly and efficiently as possible.

First some background. Some Members may be aware that attorneys can choose to have SSA directly pay their fees for representing clients for Social Security disability benefits. In such cases, when the claimant is awarded past-due benefits SSA withholds the appropriate attorney’s fee from the benefits that are owed the claimant, and sends the fee directly to the attorney. Prior to this year, no change was made for SSA costs in processing, withholding, and forwarding this fee.

This was changed under a proposal originally made by the Clinton Administration that was incorporated in the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act, which is designed to help disabled individuals enter or return to the workforce. This law provides new medical and employment services to help individuals with disabilities find and keep jobs without fear of losing important benefits once they begin the disability rolls. That’s a critical goal, and one that requires additional resources. In determining ways to pay for the added benefits in the “Ticket” law, many people on both sides of the aisle thought that having lawyers—rather than the Social Security trust fund—pick up the tab for Social Security’s costs in processing their paychecks was appropriate. Thus a version of the original Administration proposal on attorney fees was included in the final conference agreement on the Ticket bill approved by the House of Representatives 418-2 on November 18, 1999.

As this legislation progressed, several changes were made that improved the original proposal. For example, the General Accounting Office is required to study whether the assessment should be linked to how quickly SSA works promptly. If they don’t SSA will lose money and attorneys will not be charged their assessment. Hopefully it will not come to that, but in the past SSA has not had a stellar record in terms of processing this workload in a timely manner.

Introducing this legislation now will serve to further discussion on this topic, especially in anticipation of an upcoming hearing I plan to hold in the Social Security Subcommittee on additional process reforms. Suggested reforms include: the consideration of a flat fee as opposed to a percentage of past-due benefits, the extension of the attorney’s fee direct payment provisions to the Supplemental Security Income program, the issuance of past-due benefits and the attorney’s fee in a joint check made payable to the beneficiary and the attorney and the application of Prompt Payment Act provisions to past-due benefits and attorney fee payments. These suggested reforms follow this statement in legislative form. I would encourage and suggest for additional provisions my colleagues or other informed individuals may have on this issue, and of course would welcome cosponsors to this legislation. Already we have heard from many claimant representatives, and I hear from many more as we move on with this issue.

**Suggested Provisions for Attorney Fee Payment Legislation**

**Streamlining of Attorney Fee Payment System**

(a) **Maximum Limit on Assessments.** Section 206(d)(2)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 406(d)(2)(A)) is amended—

(1) by striking “equal to” and inserting “equal to the lesser of—”;
(2) by striking “the product obtained” and inserting the following: “(i) the product obtained”;
(3) by striking subparagraph (B)” and inserting “paragraph (B)”;
and
(4) by adding at the end the following new clause: “(ii) $25.00.”

(b) **Issuance of Joint Checks.**—

(1) In General.—Section 206 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 406) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

(6) **Issuance of Joint Checks.**—In any case in which a claimant is determined to be entitled to past-due benefits, and such claimant chooses to receive such benefits in the form of a joint check made payable to both the claimant and attorney and after the documentation required by the Commissioner for payment of any fees as a required payment by the Commissioner of such fees.

(2) In applying this chapter to the Social Security Administration pursuant to paragraph (1)—

(A) the date of issuance of the award certificate by the Social Security Administration shall be deemed to start the payment period under 5 CFR 1315.4(f); and
(B) the documentation required by the Social Security Administration to certify a claim or fee payment under title 42, United States Code shall be deemed to satisfy the documentation requirement of 5 CFR 1315.9.

**DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001**

**SPEECH OF HON. RUBEN HINOJOSA OF TEXAS IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES Thursday, June 8, 2000**

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4577) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of the amendment on 21st century community learning centers.

I have been involved with education issues for almost 30 years. This experience has strongly reinforced for me that all children, regardless of income level or race have the same potential for high achievement and healthy development when provided appropriate opportunities.

Thus, our goal must be to support the development of quality afterschool programs for all children, but especially those in low-income communities.

Our goal should also be to see the expanded-day programs linked to the core school day.