

The proposed legislation provides the first major benefit improvements in railroad retirement in more than 25 years. The primary benefit improvement are:

(1) The age at which employees can retire with full benefits is reduced from 62 years to 60 years with 30 years of service as it was before changes made in 1983.

(2) The number of years required for vesting in the Railroad Retirement System is reduced from ten years to five years similar to most other pension plans.

(3) The benefits of widows and widowers are improved so that a surviving spouse's annuity would be guaranteed to be no less than the amount the retiree was receiving in the month before his or her death, and

(4) If the retirement plan becomes overfunded, benefits are automatically improved.

H.R. 4844 also reduces significantly the payroll taxes paid by the railroads. By the third year following passage of this bill, the railroads stand to gain nearly \$400 million annually for lower payroll taxes. All of these savings go directly to the railroads' bottom lines and can be used to make investments needed in the railroad infrastructure and to improve the wages and working conditions of railway workers.

It is important to note that nothing in this legislation alters the fundamental nature of the program. Railroad retirement benefits will continue to be guaranteed, in the final analysis, by the United States Government.

Last year, the House passed this bill overwhelmingly, but the Senate failed to act before the 106th Congress ended. This year the House, once again passed this important measure by an overwhelming margin—and this time the Senate has acted. Only the bill number is different from what the House has already passed.

This is a good bill. It is good for workers, it is good for retirees and their survivors, it is good for the railroads, and it is good for the country. I urge all Members to support it today so we can get it to the President before the holiday seasons.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the House will finally have the opportunity to send the "Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2001" to the White House to be enacted into law. We will send this bill to President Bush for his signature shortly.

In the Third District of West Virginia, I represent 8,300 citizens who will benefit from this bill. This ranks southern West Virginia seventh in the nation. The bill will double benefits for widows of railroad retirees, reduce the retirement age from 62 to 60 years of age with 30 years of service, and allow a person to be vested in the system after five years of service, rather than 10 years, as currently required.

I constantly hear from anxious constituents asking when the bill will be enacted. Projections suggest benefits, which are modest to begin with, will nearly double after this bill passes. This bill means a lot to railroad retirees. It is an example of the type of legislation in which people can see direct benefits to improve their daily lives and quality of life.

We have endured a long, rough road getting to this day. This bill includes the exact provisions of H.R. 4844, which I helped to write in the 106th Congress, and which passed the House by an overwhelming bi-partisan vote of 391–25 on September 7, 2000.

My constituents were disappointed and frustrated last year when the bill was not enacted into law, especially since it is a product of two years of negotiation between railroad workers and management of the railroad industry.

Now, in the 107th Congress, we have done our job in the House. We passed the House version of Railroad Retirement bill H.R. 1140, on July 31st by another overwhelming bi-partisan vote of 384–33.

Finally, the Senate passed the bill last week, on December 5, 2001, by a vote of 90–9.

When this bill becomes law, it will enable railroad retirees and widows to enjoy a better quality of life, by receiving the increased benefits they greatly deserve, and which they have worked so long to earn. They spent their working lives paying into their retirement, and they deserve decent, adequate benefits to live comfortably in their retirement years.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COOKSEY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. QUINN) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill, H.R. 10. The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will now put the question on each motion to suspend the rules on which further proceedings were postponed earlier today.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

H. Con. Res. 281, by the yeas and nays;

H.R. 3282, by the yeas and nays; and H.R. 10, concur in Senate amendments, by the yeas and nays.

The Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the time for any electronic vote after the first such vote in this series.

HONORING JOHNNY MICHEAL SPANN, FIRST AMERICAN KILLED IN COMBAT IN WAR AGAINST TERRORISM IN AFGHANISTAN, AND PLEDGING CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR MEMBERS OF ARMED FORCES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question of suspending the rules and agreeing to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 281.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. Goss) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 281, on which the yeas and nays are ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 401, nays 0, not voting 32, as follows:

[Roll No. 483]

YEAS—401

Abercrombie	DeGette	Israel
Aderholt	DeLauro	Issa
Akin	DeLay	Istook
Allen	DeMint	Jackson (IL)
Andrews	Deutsch	Jackson-Lee
Armey	Diaz-Balart	(TX)
Baca	Dicks	Jenkins
Bachus	Dingell	John
Baird	Doggett	Johnson (CT)
Baker	Doolittle	Johnson (IL)
Baldacci	Doyle	Johnson, E. B.
Baldwin	Dreier	Johnson, Sam
Balleger	Duncan	Jones (NC)
Barcia	Dunn	Jones (OH)
Barrett	Edwards	Kanjorski
Bartlett	Ehlers	Kaptur
Bass	Emerson	Keller
Becerra	Engel	Kelly
Bentsen	Eshoo	Kennedy (MN)
Bereuter	Etheridge	Kennedy (RI)
Berkley	Evans	Kerns
Berry	Everett	Kildee
Biggart	Farr	Kilpatrick
Bilirakis	Fattah	Kind (WI)
Bishop	Ferguson	King (NY)
Blumenauer	Filner	Kingston
Blunt	Flake	Kirk
Boehlert	Fletcher	Klecza
Boehner	Foley	Knollenberg
Bonilla	Forbes	Knollenberg
Bonior	Ford	Kucinich
Bono	Frank	LaFalce
Boozman	Frelinghuysen	LaHood
Borski	Frost	Lampson
Boswell	Gallegly	Langevin
Boucher	Ganske	Lantos
Boyd	Gekas	Largent
Brady (PA)	Gibbons	Larsen (WA)
Brady (TX)	Gilchrest	Larson (CT)
Brown (FL)	Gillmor	Latham
Brown (OH)	Gilman	LaTourette
Brown (SC)	Goode	Leach
Bryant	Goodlatte	Lee
Burr	Gordon	Levin
Burton	Goss	Lewis (CA)
Buyer	Graham	Lewis (GA)
Callahan	Graves	Lewis (KY)
Calvert	Green (TX)	Linder
Camp	Green (WI)	Lipinski
Cannon	Greenwood	LoBiondo
Cantor	Grucci	Lofgren
Capito	Gutierrez	Lowe
Capps	Gutknecht	Lucas (KY)
Cardin	Hall (OH)	Lucas (OK)
Carson (IN)	Hall (TX)	Lynch
Carson (OK)	Hansen	Manoney (NY)
Castle	Harman	Manzullo
Chabot	Hart	Markey
Chambliss	Hastings (FL)	Masara
Clay	Hastings (WA)	Matheson
Clayton	Hayes	McCarthy (MO)
Clement	Hayworth	McCarthy (NY)
Clyburn	Hefley	McCollum
Coble	Hergert	McCreery
Collins	Hill	McDermott
Combest	Hilleary	McGovern
Condit	Hilliard	McHugh
Conyers	Hinchev	McInnis
Cooksey	Hinojosa	McIntyre
Costello	Hobson	McKeon
Cox	Hoefel	McKinney
Coyne	Hoekstra	McNulty
Cramer	Holden	Meehan
Crane	Holt	Meek (FL)
Crenshaw	Honda	Meeks (NY)
Cummings	Horn	Menendez
Cunningham	Houghton	Mica
Davis (CA)	Hoyer	Millender-
Davis (FL)	Hulshof	McDonald
Davis (IL)	Hunter	Miller, Dan
Davis, Jo Ann	Hyde	Miller, Gary
Davis, Tom	Inslee	Miller, George
DeFazio	Isakson	Miller, Jeff