

a sufficient return that is going to leave the program there strong enough for our kids and our grandkids.

What we are talking about tonight is working together to preserve that program in a bipartisan way, to preserve it so that our kids and our grandkids are going to get a fair deal. Can we go to our kids and our grandkids, can I go home and tell them they are going to pay 12.4 percent of their wages and FICA taxes and, oh, by the way, you are going to take a cut after taking care of my generation and our Social Security benefits? That is wrong. That is wrong. And we do not need to do it. But if we continue the partisan bickering, we will need to do it.

I would challenge my friends on the other side of the aisle to come forward with a plan. The reaction has been absolutely absent. There are not even phantom plans out there to deal with this. We have to work together. Come forward with a plan, sponsor a plan, have it programmed and say that it is going to save Social Security for all time and we will work with it and have it scored that way. For us to continue the bickering on both sides of the aisle with regard to this is terrible.

This commission has worked hard, and as the gentleman correctly pointed out, they are distinguished individuals. They worked hard. Maybe the gentleman does not like the results, maybe I do not like the results, I think we can do better; but their job was not to legislate. Their job was to come forth with ideas, and this is what they have done.

I commend the President for putting together this bipartisan commission to come back to us. They have shown there is a problem out there. This resolution very clearly states that the Social Security System is going to be in trouble in 2016. So tomorrow when we get a big vote, and I am going to ask for a recorded vote, this is going to be an acknowledgment by the Congress that there is a problem that must be faced.

Let us face it now and let us face it together.

Mr. ENGLISH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 282, Keeping the Social Security Promise Initiative. This resolution simply reaffirms Congress's resolve to strengthen the Social Security program for future generations without lowering benefits or increasing taxes. Mr. Speaker, Social Security provides essential retirement security for more than 45 million Americans. With each paycheck, workers send their hard-earned payroll taxes to Social Security with the promise of security in their retirement. In reforming the system Congress should not do anything that will jeopardize that security or break our promises to America's seniors.

President Bush has recognized that Social Security cannot sustain the imminent retirement of the baby boomers and future generations. He should be commended for creating a bipartisan Commission to Strengthen Social Security. The final report is due on December 21, 2001. The Commission has proposed three options to date, two of which would reduce benefits.

The responsibility for reforming Social Security ultimately lies with the Congress. I believe we can protect Social Security's commitment to our current and future retirees without lowering benefits or raising taxes while providing cost-of-living adjustments. With Social Security anticipated to run a deficit in 2016, now is the time for Congress and the President to work together in a bipartisan fashion to put Social Security on sound financial footing for generations to come.

I ask my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 282.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 282, which reiterates Congress' commitment to our seniors to keep the promise of Social Security.

For years now, Congress and the public have known that Social Security would soon be facing serious financing challenges due to shifting demographics. With the aging of the baby boom generation, the number of retiring Americans receiving benefits is beginning to overwhelm the number of working Americans paying into the Social Security system. In addition, thanks to important medical advances and healthy behavioral changes, Americans are living longer. The result of these factors is that beginning in 2016, Social Security payments will exceed worker contributions into the trust funds.

This is a scary prospect for the millions of Americans who receive Social Security benefits. Many of those individuals depend upon their monthly Social Security checks to survive. As we fight our global war on terrorism, we must not lose sight of the fact that terror can come in many forms. It is every bit as frightening to an elderly man or woman that the Social Security check might be late—and far more real. Too many of these people are living from one check to the next and balancing food against medicine. As their Representatives in Congress, we should at least provide them with the security of the promise of Social Security.

It is also a scary prospect, Mr. Speaker, for the millions of Americans who are approaching retirement. They have been paying into the Social Security trust funds because they have to, not because they believe in Social Security. In fact, numerous studies have shown that more young Americans believe in UFOs than in their future Social Security checks.

It is clear that Social Security in its current form—the form it has had since the Great Depression—is unsustainable. If we are to keep the promise that so many seniors and working Americans have relied upon for years, we must reform this program. There are many possibilities for reform, including adding personal investment options. The President appointed a commission of experts from business, think tanks, and government to explore these alternatives and to make recommendations to Congress for change. They are expected to vote on their final report today, and Congress should consider their recommendations with due deliberative speed. We must act quickly, but more importantly, we must act right.

But throughout our deliberations, Mr. Speaker, we must maintain our steadfastness to keep the promise of Social Security. We should not raise Social Security taxes and we should not cut benefits. We must use the innovative spirit that is America's hallmark to meet this challenge and find a way to strengthen and improve Social Security.

Building upon the Social Security lock box legislation that this body has already approved, this resolution lays the groundwork for our coming debate, reaffirming our commitment to Social Security's beneficiaries, in particular, the most vulnerable beneficiaries—the low-income, the women, and minorities. I look forward to reviewing these issues with my colleagues and developing a real solution to this challenge.

I urge all my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 282.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SHAW) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 282.

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. SHAW. 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.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the subject of House Concurrent Resolution 282.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3295, HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT OF 2001

Mr. REYNOLDS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 107-331) on the resolution (H. Res. 311) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3295) to establish a program to provide funds to States to replace punch card voting systems, to establish the Election Assistance Commission to assist in the administration of Federal elections and to otherwise provide assistance with the administration of certain Federal election laws and programs, to establish minimum election administration standards for States and units of local government with responsibility for the administration of Federal elections, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.