years, Mary is retiring and leaving her position as Chief Financial Officer of the Center.

As Mary retires and leaves the day to day work at the Madison Medical Center, she leaves an indelible mark on the entire Madison County region. For 25 years she has dedicated her professional life to improving health care affordability, accessibility and service. Her contributions have been a source of great pride and satisfaction for the Madison Medical Center and have resulted in such community-wide recognition as the Administrative Management Award for her hard work as a health care provider in Madison County.

There is no doubt that Mary, a graduate of Greenville High School, who has spent a great deal of time and energy helping others, will not simply rest on laurels now that she is retiring. Instead, I'm sure that she will spend time on both new activities and favorite pastimes. Specifically, I am referring to enjoying time with those people who mean the most to her—her husband Hershel and her children, David and Dennis. But most of all, I am certain that those individuals who will benefit the most from her retirement will be her four grandchildren: Mallory, Chelsea, David Scott and Dustin.

It's often been said that success is not measured by great wealth or material treasures. Instead, success is measured on the person you are, the life you live, and how your life influences the lives of others. If that is true, and I believe that it is, then we are all richer for knowing Mary Bess.

While Mary may be leaving the Madison Medical Center, her contributions to the organization are timeless and will endure. She leaves the Madison Medical Center far stronger, smarter and richer than it was when she joined it and that is a legacy for which she can be proud.

Mr. Speaker, on this very special occasion, I ask that all of my colleagues join me in congratulating Mary on this milestone and wish her every happiness for the future.

DANGER AHEAD: SOCIAL SECURITY PRIVATIZATION IS BREAKING THE PROMISE

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 11, 2001

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the House is considering a resolution stating our commitment to maintain the promise of Social Security by guaranteeing lifetime, inflation-proof benefits to current and future beneficiaries.

I am not surprised that we feel the need to do so tonight in light of today's dangerous recommendations by the President's Social Security Commission, that we feel the need to reaffirm our commitment to Social Security on the same day that the Commission is suggesting that we break that promise.

We should assure Americans—current retirees, future retirees, persons on disability, survivors and dependents—that we will not abandon them, cut their benefits, raise their retirement age, change benefit formulas, reduce COLAS, or take any other step that jeopardizes their financial security.

We should assure Americans that we will reject the recommendations of the President's Social Security Commission.

We all know that this Commission was handpicked to include only those who favor privatization and individual accounts. It does not include representatives of seniors'groups, women's groups, or consumer groups. It held closed-door sessions in subcommittee meetings'' designed to circumvent government in the sunshine requirements. But even this Commission agrees that you cannot have privatization without cutting benefits.

Two weeks ago, I had the opportunity to meet with members of the Commission at an event sponsored by the Women's Caucus. At that meeting, we were told that the Commission's recommendations would not guarantee current benefits to all current and future retirees. We were told that only those 55 years or older would be guaranteed current benefits. For everyone else, benefit levels could be lower.

In fact, the Commission's recommendations would lower Social Security benefits for future beneficiaries by between 30 percent to 48 percent. Who would be hurt? Persons with disabilities, children, low-wage workers, persons of color and women.

As we know, Social Security is of special importance to women, who are 60% of all recipients. Without Social Security, over half of older women would live in poverty. Women understand that value of Social Security, we know that we must protect it now and in the future.

Therefore, we should listen to what women's groups have to say about the Commission's recommendations issued today.

Martha Burk, chair of the National Council of Women's Organizations, says that ''The President's Social Security Commission proposes major cuts in guaranteed benefits that will not be made up by the stock market gains from individual accounts.''

Heidi Hartmann, head of the Institute for Women's Policy Research, says that the recommendations ''risk the future economic security of younger workers, particularly women.

They are joined in opposing these recommendations by groups like the Older Women's League, the National Organization for Women, the American Association of University Women, and Business and Professional Women, USA.

In light of the widespread public opposition to privatization, I am not surprised that the Republican leadership is bringing up a resolution that distances this body from the Commission's recommendations.

I only hope that we will do more than voice our commitment to the future of social Security. I hope that we will put privatization proposals to rest for good.

BIPARTISAN TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 6, 2001

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I commend the diligent efforts of Chairman THOMAS, my colleagues and their staff members in drafting and sponsoring H.R. 3005, the Bipartisan Trade Promotion Authority Act of 2001.

H.R. 3005 is being referred to as the most environmentally and labor responsive legislation regarding Trade Promotion Authority (Fast Track) to be sponsored by the U.S. Congress. However, I share the concerns raised by many of my constituents that H.R. 3005's labor and environmental standards do not go far enough to ensure a level playing field in our proposed trade agreements.

H.R. 3005 refers to environmental and labor provisions as negotiating objectives. Our trade history reveals that during the past 25 years including labor rights, and now environmental rights, as ''negotiating objectives'' do not guarantee that these provisions will actually be included in any proposed trade agreements. The geopolitical and trade landscape has changed, of the 142 members comprising the World Trade Organization (WTO), 100 are classified as developing nations and 30 are referred to as lesser-developed nations. Why is this important? It is important because with China's accession into the WTO, the 130 nations will become more forceful in promoting their trade agendas, and an opportunity for a more favorable trade agreement becomes apparent if a nation lowers its environmental and labor standards. Many nations' standards are sub-standard at best.

As drafted, the overall negotiating objective of H.R. 3005 is to promote respect for worker rights. My constituents report that the worker rights provisions do not guarantee that ''core'' labor standards are included in the corpus of prospective trade agreements. By core labor standards, I refer to the International Labor Organization's 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: freedom of association, the right to organize and for collective bargaining, and the rights to be free from child labor, forced labor and employment discrimination, which many people throughout the world are confronted with.

My constituents are troubled that H.R. 3005 does not require a signatory to an agreement to improve or even to maintain that its domestic laws comport with the standards of the International Labor Organization, in practice an incentive is created for lowering them. Among H.R. 3005's principle objectives is a provision entitled labor and the environment, which calls for the signatories to trade agreements to enforce their own environment and labor laws. The United States, as a leader in the global trade community must set the example by raising the labor and environmental standards of its trading partners. In the end, it will be the United States who is called upon to provide the resources to clean-up environmental disasters.

Through their first-hand accounts, my constituents report that workers in many nations that we seek to enter into bi-lateral and multilateral trade agreements are subjected to exploitation, harassment and worse for exercising their rights to collective bargaining, and are forced to work under abusive conditions. For example, in our own hemisphere more than 33% of the complaints filed with the International Labor Organization's Committee on Free Association originate in the Andean region. I understand that new labor laws in Bolivia, Ecuador, Columbia and Peru undermine the right to collective bargaining, and there are scores of reports from NGO's regarding unconscionable violations of the most fundamental rights for workers and their union representatives. The AFL–CIO reports that since January 2001, more than 93 union members in Columbia have been murdered, while the perpetrators have gone unpunished.