

order because new supplies are vital to long-term economic stability and to current and future employment. Exploration of the Western Gulf of Mexico will permit access to one of our largest sources of oil.

Among other things my second amendment was designed to ensure that the large fluctuations in the price of transportation fuels will not continue to pose significant impediments to budget planning for consumers, businesses, and Federal, State and local governments. Despite the fact this amendment was not ruled in order, it is crucial that there be established a sense of the Congress that the Secretary of Energy, acting through the Administrator of the Energy Information Administration, should commence an immediate investigation on the causes of high gasoline prices in the United States and, in collaboration with the petroleum industry and the Congress, develop a solution to such prices.

Finally, my third amendment would have given Historically Black Colleges and Universities, HBCU, the opportunity to develop new and existing programs in the area of alternative energy technologies. In our Nation's effort to become more energy independent, it is critical that we allow for as much research and development as possible. African Americans have made outstanding contributions to the energy industry and I see no reason not to allow them to make even more contributions now.

Mr. Speaker, while I support many aspects of the bill, I oppose the rule.

CONGRATULATING MATHILDA SHEPTAK ON 40 YEARS IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 21, 2005

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask you and my esteemed colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in congratulating my good friend Mathilda Sheptak as she marks her 40th year in the tourism industry in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Mathilda was born into the hospitality field. Her family ran a boarding house with a restaurant and gas station in Lakewood, New Jersey. Mathilda is the daughter of Louis and Catherine Barravecchia. Mathilda is married to Steve Sheptak, a retired IBM sales and marketing executive.

When Mathilda was eleven years old, her family bought the Overlook Inn in Canadensis. The tourism industry was the dominant business in the rural Poconos.

At this time, Pocono resorts were open from Memorial Day to Columbus Day. The family resort had 30 rooms and no liquor license. Guests were served three meals a day. Entertainment revolved around card games, cookouts, a pool table, and eventually, a swimming pool.

Mathilda thrived on meeting the guests and developing interpersonal relationships with the families who would return year after year. Mathilda grew up with the "resort brats"—the children of all the other resort owners. During the off-season, these families worked to improve their resorts and planned for the coming season.

Mathilda attended Pocono Mountain High School and was part of its first graduating class. She attended East Stroudsburg University and then worked at a corporation that manufactured products for IBM.

Mathilda joined the Pocono Mountain Vacation Bureau on February 1, 1965, as a secretary and subsequently moved up to office manager. She eventually took over the No. 2 spot at PMVB, and has been deputy executive director ever since. In this position, she is responsible for the budget, environmental planning, financing and statewide issues.

Forty years in tourism is a testament to Mathilda's love of the Pocono region. I am fortunate to have worked with such a dedicated individual in promoting the tourism industry.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Mathilda Sheptak on this milestone and wishing her many more successful years. Tourism remains the area's largest industry and Mathilda is a big part of that legacy.

IN RECOGNITION OF QUINCY BOCK FOR RECEIVING THE GOLD AWARD FROM THE GIRL SCOUTS

HON. RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 21, 2005

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my constituent Quincy Bock of Senior Troop #1107 as she receives the honor of a Gold Award from the Girl Scouts.

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest award that a Girl Scout may earn. It is not an honor given lightly. The young women who receive this award must demonstrate leadership skills, organizational skills, and sense of community and commitment. Quincy Bock exhibited all these skills with her Gold Award Project, a Resource for Refugees, for The Nile Sisters, a non-profit organization that helps refugee families become self-reliant through education and support.

Quincy successfully created three databases and produced two pieces of literature for The Nile Sisters to use in helping refugee families. The databases Quincy designed and the training she gave the organization will greatly increase the organization's efficiency. In addition, the pamphlet she created has already generated a number of donations and offers of assistance. Because of Quincy's direct contribution, The Nile Sisters will be able to better serve refugee families seeking a better life here in America.

I am proud to recognize Quincy Bock's achievements. She is a shining example of the promise of the next generation. She has already set what I hope is the foundation for a lifetime of active citizenship. I congratulate Quincy and her family on this momentous occasion.

INTRODUCTION OF RETIREMENT SECURITY ACT OF 2005

HON. THOMAS E. PETRI

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 21, 2005

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Retirement Security Act of 2005.

This bill addresses the financing problems facing the Social Security Trust Fund through the creation of Personal Social Security Investment Accounts for each newborn child. This plan would establish a mechanism for reducing the long term fiscal pressures facing Social Security without changing the current benefit structure or diverting payroll taxes from the Trust Fund.

My bill seeks to use the benefits of the private market to place Social Security on a sound financial footing, as do a number of other reform plans. But more than that, I seek to maximize the magic of compound interest by opening savings accounts for future retirees as soon as they are born. Under the Retirement Security Act, the Federal government would create a personal investment account for each newborn American child with an initial government contribution of \$1,000. The account would be invested in any of the funds available to Federal employees through the Thrift Savings Plan, and earnings would accrue tax free. Account holders, or the parents of minor account holders, would be free to make additional pre-tax contributions to these accounts and enjoy the opportunity to invest in these safe and well-managed investment accounts.

At retirement, each retiree would qualify for the same Social Security benefit as earned under the current Social Security system. Benefits would be paid first from each worker's personal account, and payments from the Trust Fund would begin only after the balance of the personal account had been depleted. Those who take advantage of the opportunity to make additional contributions may well find their balance in excess of the amount needed to fund their Social Security benefits, and these funds would belong to the individual investor. My bill provides a variety of options, including lump sum distributions and the purchase of life annuities with level or inflation-adjusted monthly payments for disposition of the surplus balance.

An initial contribution of \$1,000 invested today that grows at the average combined rate of return of the five Thrift Savings Plan investment options would grow to an inflation adjusted balance of \$58,000 by retirement at age 67. For purposes of comparison, this amount would be enough to purchase an annuity with a monthly payment equal to 46 percent of the today's average Social Security retirement benefit. A single matching payment of \$1,000 by a parent on the occasion of their child's birth would endow an account which would produce almost 100 percent of the average benefit and, perhaps just as important, give that child the gift of a lifelong savings vehicle which offers the potential of greater financial security in retirement than can be provided by Social Security alone.

Clearly, the focus of my legislation is long-term. Social Security's fiscal problems will begin to pinch long before children born today are ready to retire. By now, we're all familiar with the projections provided in the annual report of the Social Security Board of Trustees. The Trustees have forecast that our current Social Security surpluses will turn to deficits by 2017 and that the bonds collecting in the Social Security Trust Fund will be fully redeemed by 2041. At that time, it's anticipated that payroll taxes will be sufficient only to pay 74 percent of expected retirement benefits. Though my legislation would make no other

changes to Social Security, when combined with other reasonable reform ideas, it can provide a component of a comprehensive solution to Social Security's long and shorter-term financial problems.

We've reached an important moment in the life of the Social Security program. It's obvious that we need to bring more money into the system to keep the promises we've made and to allow us to continue to offer some measure of retirement security. Personal investment accounts are one way to bolster the system, yet they have become the object of too much criticism and much disinformation. Many of our constituents have become concerned that the diversion of payroll tax revenue into personal accounts of today's workers will threaten the benefits of current retirees. A campaign is being waged which fosters these fears and may prevent the adoption of even those personal accounts which have no impact on the Social Security Trust Fund.

My bill provides the opportunity for Congress to demonstrate that it can implement a system of personal accounts without diverting payroll taxes and that will build retirement savings for future generations without enriching stock brokers or introducing unacceptable investment risk to American workers. As the success of these personal accounts become apparent, growing numbers of Americans will have greater confidence in this avenue of reform, presenting opportunities to expand the use of personal accounts. The time has come for us to take this important step forward, and I encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

IN RECOGNITION OF LOUISIANA'S
256TH ARMY NATIONAL GUARD
AND SUPPORT FOR EFFORTS TO
ASSIST IRAQI CITIZENS

HON. CHARLES W. BOUSTANY, JR.

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 21, 2005

Mr. BOUSTANY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the work that members of our armed forces are doing in Iraq. Too often, the news from Iraq is of attacks from insurgents, the political difficulties of forming a new democracy and international political gamesmanship. I want to highlight one effort by our troops to befriend the Iraqi citizens and demonstrate our commitment to democracy and freedom.

Sgt. Martin Schulthess is a member of the 256th Battalion of the Army National Guard and he is a paramedic with Acadian Ambulance Service. In patrols through Iraq, he and his troops have been able to earn the trust and friendship of the Iraqi citizens. After suffering under Saddam Hussein, they are struggling to create a civil society without fear of torture, imprisonment or death. These Iraqis know American and coalition forces support their efforts to govern themselves. They support the elimination of terrorist insurgents and former Baath Party members who do not want to establish a new government.

Sgt. Schulthess attributes a measure of his success to the small gifts he distributes to Iraqi children. These small hand-outs help to build the trust of the Iraqi people and gain their assistance. The ability of Sgt. Schulthess and the 256th Battalion to build and maintain

these relationships has provided valuable intelligence to enhance the safety of our troops from Southwest Louisiana.

I am proud to represent Southwest Louisiana and the home of the 256th. I know the families and friends of these soldiers are ready for them to return home. Soldiers like Sgt. Schulthess set an example that all of Acadiana and Louisiana can be proud of. The kind of ingenuity, creativity, and initiative demonstrated by our troops will help to bring them home safely after planting the seeds of democracy in Iraq.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE AMERICAN LEGACY FOUNDATION ON WINNING THE UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY'S CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH EXCELLENCE AWARD

HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 21, 2005

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the American Legacy Foundation for being selected as a final winner in the Environmental Protection Agency's Children's Environmental Health Awards.

The widespread use of tobacco and devastating effects of secondhand smoke contribute to a serious environmental health risk for America's children. Since its inception 5 years ago, the American Legacy Foundation, a non-profit health organization dedicated to building a world where young people reject tobacco and anyone can quit, has implemented several innovative outreach initiatives and programs to discourage adult and youth tobacco use and reduce the effects of secondhand smoke.

Passive exposure through secondhand smoke puts children at risk for a range of health consequences including asthma, ear infections, bronchitis, pneumonia, reduced lung function, respiratory infection, and other chronic respiratory symptoms. According to current population survey data, 13.8 million kids ages 0 to 17 are exposed to secondhand smoke and 22 percent of middle school students and 24 percent of high school students are exposed to secondhand smoke in the home.

The American Legacy Foundation has launched key initiatives to address the negative health effects of tobacco. The Foundation has designed public awareness campaigns and initiatives to educate and empower youth to take action against the environmental health threat from smoking and secondhand smoke.

Some of the Foundation's most successful programs include truth[®], the Youth Speakers Bureau, the Youth Advisory Panel and the Statewide Youth Movement Against Tobacco Use (Youth Empowerment) Grants.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I encourage my colleagues to join with me to congratulate the American Legacy Foundation for their progress in successfully reducing youth smoking and for receiving the Environmental Protection Agency's Children's Environmental Health Award.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 21, 2005

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I missed nine votes on April 20th, 2005. The votes were on amendments to the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (H.R. 6). Had I been present I would have voted "yea" on rollcall 115, 116, 117, 118, 120, 121, 122, and 123. I would have voted "nay" on rollcall 119.

THE READING FAILURE PREVENTION ACT OF 2005

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 21, 2005

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Reading Failure Prevention Act of 2005. This bill would authorize the Secretary of Education to make grants to States to establish statewide screening programs for children who are 5 to 7 years of age to help prevent reading failure.

Reading failure is pervasive. Declining test scores in reading have been noted in many states. Just as troubling, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 37 percent of our nation's 4th graders and 26 percent of 8th graders score below the basic reading level.

The Reading Failure Prevention Act of 2005 would help address this crisis by authorizing grants to States for screening incoming students for dyslexia or other reading failure traits. It also would provide adequate professional development for personnel who administer the screening programs. Dyslexia, often referred to as a language-based learning disability, is the most common form of learning disability.

Recently, approximately 15 percent to 20 percent of the population was reported to have a learning disability and the National Institutes of Health reported that 60 percent to 80 percent of those with learning disabilities have problems with reading and language skills. Predictions for the coming decades indicate that the number of children with learning disabilities will increase for associated social, economic, and educational reasons.

In spite of the fact that reading success in early grades is an essential basis for success in later grades, current methods of identifying children as learning disabled rely on a "wait and fail" model, where children must demonstrate severe academic problems before receiving help. The Reading Failure Prevention Act of 2005 would end this cycle by providing early screening so that appropriate intervention can begin immediately.

Because reading disorders, such as dyslexia, often affect oral language functioning, individuals with these disorders are at a disadvantage as they enter their adolescent years, when language becomes more central to their peer relationships.

If these students do not receive proper intervention, they can begin to experience academic failure and a host of social and emotional problems. However, when trained professionals catch learning disorders such as