the quiet and competent strength of the man quite well:

Ball, six feet one inch, is a white-haired, broad-shouldered man whose gravity is lightened by a readily available twinkle and chuckle. He wears black-rimmed, prominent glasses that he takes on and off when shifting from speaking to reading. His expression is frequently softened by his easy smile and firm but unaggressive manner. At meetings he leans forward intently in his seat and, with a formalism that seems now a little old-fashioned, begins to speak in a manner instilled by years of testifying before Congress: 'Mr. Chairman, let me begin by stating that I am in full agreement with the general thrust of Mr. X's remarks. But I would like, if I may, to bring up three somewhat technical points about social security. . . .' Ball could have posed for pictures of executive presence in Fortune during the 1950s and 1960s. But in Bob Ball's case, the imagery captures much of the man, not a myth. Ball did indeed come to stand for the SSA and its reputation for honest, competent, reliable service to Americans, who were regarded as clients, not supplicants.

Even after retirement as Commissioner in 1973, Mr. Ball was often relied upon by policymakers and Presidents as a key advisor on Social Security and Medicare. An aide to President Jimmy Carter deemed him to be one of the ''high priests of Social Security.''

When the financing arrangements for Social Security needed to be reformed, he was appointed by President Reagan to a commission to recommend a plan of action to ensure the program's long-term fiscal health. In that role, Mr. Ball unexpectedly salvaged negotiations that had been stymied by partisan bickering and produced the deal that saved Social Security in 1983.

As the Founding Chair of the National Academy of Social Insurance, Mr. Ball helped create in 1986 what has grown to be an organization of over 800 policy experts dedicated to helping Americans better understand the role that social insurance programs play in our lives through research, leadership development programs, and forums for exchange of ideas for issues in the field.

Well into his retirement, Mr. Ball continued to defend Social Security from ideological challenges such as efforts to privatize the system and undermine the very purpose of social insurance. Last fall, he reminded us in a piece in the New York Times that without Social Security as designed, 13 million more seniors, one million more children, and 55 percent of people with disabilities would live in poverty today.

As a chief architect of the 1983 reforms, and someone who knew the program from the inside out, he also reminded us that the prescription for Social Security's long-term fiscal health should not result in further reductions in benefits, which are already declining in value primarily because of the increasing cost of health care and Medicare premiums. In that October piece in the New York Times, he wrote that ''Social Security is the nation's most effective anti-poverty program. But it's much more than that. For every worker it provides a solid base on which to try to build an adequate level of retirement income. To weaken that foundation would he grossly irresponsible.''

I will certainly heed his advice. Policymakers who ignore him do so at their own peril, because when it comes to Social Security, Robert Ball knew what he was talking about.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 7, 2008

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise today to enter into the RECORD votes I would have cast had I been present for rollcall votes 29 through 31. I was absent on Wednesday, February 6th due to familial obligations.

If I were present, I would have voted ''yea'' on rollcall vote 29, ''yea'' on rollcall vote 30, and ''yea'' on rollcall vote 31.

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. AND MRS. JOHNNY CLIFTON

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 7, 2008

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Madam Speaker, I would like to request the House's attention to pay recognition to a special day in the lives of two constituents of mine, Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Clifton.

On February 14, Johnny and Judy Clifton will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. To help commemorate this special occasion, the couple will gather with friends and family at the First United Methodist Church of Saks, Alabama on February 9.

Johnny and Judy have raised two children, Malea and Brian, and have four grandchildren, Katie, Whitney, Nathan and Aria. Johnny is an Etowah County native, who served with distinction as an Alabama State Trooper and as a sergeant with the Alabama Bureau of Investigation. Judy grew up in Anniston, and retired from AmSouth Bank after 24 years of service and remains active in the community.

I would like to congratulate Johnny and Judy on reaching this important milestone in their lives. I wish them and their family the best in the future.

INTRODUCTION OF ''FUTA SURTAX REPEAL ACT''

HON. WALLY HERGER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 7, 2008

Mr. HERGER. Madam Speaker, employers across our country contribute a portion of their payroll on a per employee basis to pay for the potential future unemployment benefits of their workers. In a very real sense, this payment—required by law—represents a trade-off for workers, where the tax is paid at the expense of workers today, who would otherwise currently be receiving higher wages or more opportunities for work. If paid to workers directly, they could spend or save it as they wished. Still, our government has decided that this tax is an important investment that must be made on behalf of an employee in case the business falls on hard times and resorts to layoffs.

It works like this: under the provisions of the Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA), employers pay an extra 0.6 percent on the first $7,000 of payroll per employee in Federal unemployment taxes. Depending on the size of a company and the number of workers on payroll, these extra taxes can add up and affect decisions to invest in new equipment, hire workers, retain employees or even pay more in wages. Back in the 1970s, Congress faced an unusual shortfall in the trust funds that hold unemployment taxes, so it decided to levy an additional 0.2 percent surtax on employers, known as the FUTA surtax. Again, as employers paid more in non-wage benefits, the wages of employees suffered by this same amount. This meant that the previous payroll tax contribution for Federal unemployment was raised from 0.6 percent to 0.8 percent. While 0.2 percent may not seem like a significant imposition, over the decade this 25 percent increase in the overall unemployment tax restored a sound financial footing to the trust funds.

But the surtax didn't go away. Since it was no longer needed, after the 1980s, the FUTA surtax has been repeatedly extended—most recently in December 2007—and used as an extra source of tax revenue for Congress to spend on other unrelated programs. In other words, as the House and Senate expand Federal programs, the American wage payer is literally picking up the tab in a form that conveniently doesn't show up as an increased income tax burden. Today, the Federal unemployment insurance trust funds have about $35 billion more than they need, making the additional $1.5 billion per year brought in through the FUTA surtax totally unnecessary. Even without the surtax, the standard unemployment tax on employers brings in more than enough money to support the current Federal responsibilities, without even tapping the $35 billion in the trust funds. In fact, the outstanding balances in the Federal accounts are about six to seven times the annual cost of the unemployment program, leaving plenty of room for a ''rainy day'' reserve.

My legislation would repeal the FUTA surtax for once and for all. As our Nation's economy and workers face uncertain times, rolling back the FUTA surtax would provide new flexibility to employers at just the right time—enabling a stronger and more prosperous workforce.

HONORING THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF CONNY B. McCORMACK, LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGISTRAR–RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 7, 2008

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and commend Conny B. McCormack, an outstanding Californian, who has recently retired from 30 years of public service, the last 12 as Los Angeles County Registrar–Recorder/County Clerk.

Mrs. McCormack is the epitome of the competent, capable, dedicated public servant. Her career accomplished many noteworthy positions before she came to Los Angeles County. As the Los Angeles County Registrar–Recorder/County Clerk, Mrs. McCormack has met with great success. Her Registrar of Voters duties saw her conduct elections in 88 cities, 100 school districts, and 149 special districts for roughly 4 million voters across 5,000