

retirement security account. Based on our experience with the Thrift Savings Plan, I think it would be a significant step towards stronger financial security for all Americans.

The TSP has been a great success for Federal workers. Over the past 10 years, the three investment choices available to workers in the TSP have average annual rates of return of 17.5 percent, 8.5 percent, and 7.6 percent.

That means the worst performing of these three funds, the G fund, which invests strictly in Government securities, has returned over 7 percent annually to investors. That compares very, very well to the 2 to 3 percent annual return that most Americans get for their money that they pay into Social Security. Compounded over decades, the differences in the rates of return are staggering.

Under my bill, taxpayers will own their own retirement secured accounts, and they, not the Federal Government, can control how their money is invested. My legislation follows the scrupulous conflict of interest rules that have worked well for the TSP to make sure that Government cannot vote shares of stock or manipulate markets. Best of all, withdrawals from this retirement secured account will be tax free, because we should not need to penalize Americans who successfully plan for their retirement.

Congress has wisely moved in recent years to help retirees keep more of their own money. Social Security reform must continue that trend. I believe Social Security reform must be voluntary. It should give taxpayers more, not fewer, investment choices, and it must protect the most vulnerable Americans who are counting on these benefits. It is important to bring as many ideas to the table as possible as part of a national dialogue about Social Security reform. These are the principles I have tried to follow in writing this bill, and I will work with anyone on my legislation and on any other proposals to improve the Social Security system.

Mr. President, we have a golden window of opportunity now to reform Social Security. Our economy is the strongest it has been in decades. We have a budget surplus to give us some flexibility in making difficult decisions. Now we have to find the political will. It is a challenge we must meet.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator DURBIN, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### DELAY IN CAPITOL VISITORS CENTER

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I didn't know Jacob Chestnut, but I did know

Detective John Gibson, as a result of an unfortunate incident with a member of my family. Officer Gibson reacted in a very valiant way on something a couple months before he was murdered last July in this Capitol complex.

Jacob Chestnut and John Gibson, about 9 months ago, were murdered. They were murdered when an assailant went through a door, shot both of them, killed both of them, and was after other people as well. The Presiding Officer, being a physician/surgeon, was on the floor and rendered great aid and assistance to others who were injured, for which we are all grateful. After that tragedy, many of us stood on this floor and talked about the need to do something to stop these incidents in the future.

Mr. President, I look at this in a number of different ways. I look at it as someone who knows what a valiant man John Gibson was and, of course, I am sure Officer Chestnut also; I just did not know him on a personal basis. I approach this on the basis that I am a Senator and have some responsibility for this Capitol complex. I approach it as a person who is concerned about my staff and the visitors who come to this complex being safe and secure.

I approach it also as a former Capitol police officer. I have great empathy and great understanding, I believe, for what police officers go through in this facility. What we talked about last year, after this incident, is that finally, after more than a decade, we were going to do something to create a visitors center in the east plaza. In this beautiful Capitol complex, we have a big parking lot; we have asphalt. We have talked about having a nice grassy area, as well as an underground area where people can come and enter the Capitol.

Now, if people want to come and take a tour through the Capitol, they stand out on the east plaza, on that asphalt. No matter the temperature, it can be 5 degrees below zero, they still stand out there. There is no place else for them to go. If it is 100 degrees, like it gets here in August, they still stand out there. There is no place else for them to go. There is no place for them to get a drink of water. There is no place for them to go to the bathroom. They stand out on the asphalt waiting to come through the Capitol.

After the unfortunate murders of these two police officers, we talked about how we were going to do something. We immediately authorized a bill to allow construction of this facility. After that was done, we appropriated money to initiate the planning of this visitors center. In fact, we are no closer to completion of this facility today than when these two officers were gunned down by this man, this terrorist.

We need to move forward with this effort. However, we have created a bu-

reaucratic nightmare. We have four or five committees and subcommittees which have jurisdiction over how it is going to be constructed, when it is going to be constructed, and who is going to be constructing it, in what manner it is going to be constructed. We have heard lately that other committees want to get involved. We do not have enough now. We want to add some more.

I say, as a member of two committees that are talking about this, out of the three or four that are involved, I think we should get on with the business at hand. I understand the need for oversight, I understand very much, but there comes a time when we have said enough and we must move forward to do what we have to do.

This is not a waste of taxpayers' money. If we have this beautiful facility, not only will it be a convenience for the public but it will be a safety factor, because it will give a way to funnel people in this Capitol so that proper measures can be taken to find out if they are carrying weapons or bombs or anything else that could be of danger to the people inside this facility. In addition to that, it will be a place where people can go to the bathroom and escape from the elements. It will probably be set up so that there will be places for them to eat. In effect, it will be a place where there will be revenues gained from this facility. We owe this facility to the two officers who were gunned down 9 months ago, we owe it to our staffs, for we, as Members, are responsible for their safety and security. We owe it to the millions of people who come to this facility on a yearly basis. We are very proud of this U.S. Capitol; all Americans are. We should be able to come to this Capitol without fearing for our safety.

For more than 10 years, well before last year's tragedy, there had been a lot of talk about building a Capitol complex visitors center, but it has only been talk. It is about time we turn this talk into action, for the good of the country.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to speak for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Thank you.

#### NEED FOR A VISITORS CENTER

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I came to the floor to speak for a moment of personal privilege, but I heard