

These state and local disability and pension systems were developed because the original Social Security Act of 1937 excluded state and local governments from Social Security coverage. This was to avoid raising a possible Constitutional question of whether the federal government could tax state and local governments. Congress later amended the law to make state and local government employee participation in Social Security voluntary in 1950. In 1983, those already participating in Social Security were required to remain in the federal systems.

In the absence of Social Security, Colorado state and local employees developed public retirement plans which have been able to provide solid, secure benefits at a reasonable cost. The plans earn better investment returns, through private sector investments, than are available through the current pay-as-you-go Social Security system. With a diversified investment fund, the state's largest plan has earned an average annual investment return of over 11 percent during the last 25 years.

Furthermore, the plans are designed to meet the specific needs of public employees. Fire fighter pension plans, for example, are designed to take into account early retirement ages, high rates of disability and the need for extensive health care characteristic of this profession.

The one-size-fits-all approach of universal Social Security coverage would provide inadequate flexibility for safety workers' needs. Mandatory coverage will have additional consequences. Even on a new-hire basis, mandatory coverage will reduce the capital stream necessary for investment. In many plans around the country this will cause benefit cut-backs including reduced credit for future service, cuts in retiree health care coverage and cost of living adjustments.

Further, mandatory coverage represents a new tax and an unfunded federal mandate on states which would require state and local tax increases or a reduction in services for taxpayers. Health benefits for retirees would also be affected in many states.

Mr. Speaker, private sector workers would also be affected. Most states do not receive any income tax revenue from Social Security payments and the lost state revenue resulting from mandatory coverage would likely be made up from increased state taxes or budget cuts.

In Colorado, the public pension systems will be seriously compromised because most of the funding of benefit comes from investment income which would be severely cut by the transfer of significant contributions to Social Security. State retirement funds support Colorado's economy and the nation unlike Social Security funds which simply support other government programs. Reduced state pension investment means reduced Colorado capital investment. A decline in contributions translates into less investment in Colorado-based companies and real estate. Furthermore, when Colorado retirees receive fewer benefits they will pay fewer state income taxes.

The potential loss of revenue to the state is significant, but the loss of retirement contributions and security for Colorado state and local workers is even more troubling. Our state's Public Employees' Retirement Association

(PERA) anticipates an end to plan improvements for current participants and retirees. New hires would receive a combined Social Security and PERA benefit that would be slightly less than three-fourths of the current PERA benefit.

To put it plainly, under mandatory Social Security state and local workers will lose out. New hires will lose the opportunity to participate in financially strong, high-earning retirement plans and they will be forced to partake in an inefficient system and receive far less or possibly nothing at all. Those already participating in state and local government retirement plans will experience a reduction in benefits when new hire funds are redirected to Social Security. In order to make contributions to both pension and Social Security plans, state and local governments will have to raise taxes or reduce services, in which case, everyone loses.

Mr. Speaker, the only advantage Congress would realize in this scheme would be to buy two extra years for Social Security.

Over the past year, I led the Colorado delegation to protect state and local government pension and disability plans. Letters I wrote expressing our united opposition to mandatory Social Security have reached your desk. Do not disregard them or underestimate our resolve.

Congress must preserve the freedom of states, school districts, and local governments to maintain plans which best meet their needs, independent of Social Security. Social Security can and must be fixed without destroying plans upon which our constituents depend for their retirement.

Mr. Speaker, if it works, don't break it.

#### WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

SPEECH OF

**HON. JUANITA MILLENDER-McDONALD**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 24, 1999*

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the numerous women of achievement in this country during Women's History Month. I believe true leadership has no gender, race, age or religion. It consists of dedication, perseverance, hard work, compassion, wisdom and a commanding vision for the future.

Tonight I would like to honor two women in particular who have mastered all of these traits despite being faced with seemingly insurmountable obstacles. As both the Vice Chair of the Women's Caucus and an active member of the Congressional Black Caucus, I have worked with my colleagues to present two awards to Helen Thomas and Dorothy Height during Women's History Month. Since it is important to document the remarkable work of women of such achievement Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with you their stories.

Helen Thomas has been the White House bureau chief of United Press International (UPI) since 1974. Over the past several decades, Helen has covered eight presidents. She is the first female UPI White House bureau chief. Prior to that, over the span of 50

years, she has been given what she called "the big plum" job of getting doughnuts for reporters in 1942. She went on to cover exclusively "female" subjects for UPI's radio wire, which was called United Press at the time. However, her big break came when she served as the only print journalist accompanying President Nixon when he made his historic trip to China in 1972. Thus was the rise of Helen Thomas.

Helen is considered tough and incisive with a keen ability to pierce through issues to find the meaning of events. She is also considered warm, open, passionate and opinionated. She has been a self-described women's libber since the day she was born and initiated the campaign to open the doors of the National Press Club to women, which finally occurred when Nikita Khrushchev spoke at the Club in 1959—although it took another 12 years before women were admitted. In the mid-seventies, she became the National Press Club's first female officer; the first female member of the 90-year old Grid Iron Club, Washington's most exclusive press organization, and in 1993 was elected its president; and the first female officer of the White House Correspondents Association. She has received numerous awards for her work in journalism and in 1992, UPI established an internship program in her honor to be awarded annually to a female journalism student.

At the proud age of 78, she continues to jump from behind bushes near the White House jogging track to fire questions at President Clinton during his morning run. And Helen is still known for jumping over banquet tables to get to a phone before her competitors. At White House press conferences, she is inevitably the first correspondent to be called on by the President and the last to close with her signature statement, "Thank you, Mr. President."

It is with great honor that the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues bestows the Women's Leadership Award to a woman of integrity, grit and boundless energy. She serves as a tremendous role model for millions of women in America.

An equally important role model for this country is Dorothy Height. Despite reaching the ripe age of 87 years old, Dr. Height is still considered one of the nation's most influential and effective women's leader. She has her master's degree in social work, and has been awarded 23 honorary degrees from various universities, including Harvard University. Some of her most impressive achievements include her leadership of the YWCA, National Council of Negro Women and the Center for Racial Justice.

During a tragic time of civil unrest, she was the first Black and first woman named to deal with the Harlem Riots of 1935 and sat at the table with President Johnson during the civil rights movement to develop meaningful civil rights legislation. Dr. Height served as a vocal and extremely effective leader in the civil rights movement to address lynching, desegregate the armed forces, reform the criminal justice system and free access to public accommodations. She also was the national president of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority from 1947 to 1956.

Today, Dr. Height is still viewed as a dynamic orator who contributes invaluable intellectual insight to national discussions on race relations, the role of women and a range of civil rights issues. She has traveled the world to study other cultures and developed a critical understanding of the role of women in Africa, Asia, India and Latin America. She has become a living legacy throughout this country and abroad.

I am so honored to join my colleague BARBARA LEE in bestowing an award on Dr. Height for her unyielding determination to never give up, her enthusiastic, can-do approach to solving some of the nation's most complex problems, and her astute understanding of the world that can be created through equality of opportunity for all of humanity.

LOCAL CENSUS QUALITY CHECK  
ACT

SPEECH OF

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 14, 1999*

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 472, the Local Census Quality Check Act of 1999. Although this bill purports to increase the involvement of local governments in the census, it really acts to slow down and delay an accurate count. Because the Census is a significant civil rights issue, the Census for 2000 must be accurate to ensure equal representation of all Americans.

The methodology of H.R. 472 repeats the process that was used in 1990—the same process that resulted in an undercount of the population. The 1990 Census missed 8.4 mil-

lion people, 4.4 million people were counted twice and 13 million people were counted in the wrong place.

Although there were various reasons for the undercount in 1990, a disproportionate number of children, people of color and the rural and urban poor were most likely to have been missed. Thus, each of these groups was denied an equal voice in our government.

Census undercounts translate into communities losing out on federal and state funding for schools, crime prevention, health care and transportation. Because of the undercount in 1990, Texas lost almost \$1.87 billion in federal funds. A recent article in *The Houston Chronicle* estimated that Texas could lose \$2.8 billion if a similar undercount takes place.

In my district in Houston, close to 500,000 people were missed. It is estimated that 28,554 children in my district were missed. Almost five percent of all African-Americans and Hispanics were not counted in 1990, and these groups constitute almost half of the population of the city!

As Chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, the undercount of children is particularly troubling to me. Over 50 percent of all American children were missed in the census count in 1990. This undercount affects all of the programs that benefit our children—education, health care, housing, childcare, nutrition and immunizations.

H.R. 472 in its present form will delay the census by an additional nine weeks. If we want to improve our methods, then we cannot micro-manage the count after the census is complete, nor should we further delay the results by waiting for 39,000 local governments to review the count.

The Census Bureau has already developed a plan that provides for review as the count occurs instead of after the fact. After the Census of 1990, the Bureau determined that the

Post Census Local Review program was inefficient. Therefore, it has already designed a better series of programs and procedures that will promote local government participation in a timely and fair way.

In addition to the traditional headcount, the Bureau will conduct an in-depth survey of 300,000 households to measure how many people were missed. This survey, called the Accuracy and Coverage Evaluation or ACE, is more efficient and it is a better use of resources. It would cover about 85% of all housing units in the country, and twice as many local governments will be included than in 1990.

The Administration has expressed its negative views on H.R. 472. The Census Bureau has stated that this bill will compromise their efforts to conduct an accurate count. The Department of Commerce does not support this bill and recommended that the President veto it if it passes. The President has indicated that he will follow the advice of the Department of Commerce and veto this bill.

Instead of supporting H.R. 472, I ask that you support the Maloney amendment, offered by Representative CAROLYN MALONEY, which gives local governments the ability to remain within the plans developed by the Census Bureau. The Maloney amendment in the form of a substitute allows the Census Bureau to design programs to address local government concerns while not causing a delay in the count.

I urge my colleagues to vote against H.R. 472 and support the Maloney amendment. We owe it to the millions of people who were not counted. H.R. 472 will cause an unnecessary delay in the census. The Post Census Local Review method advocated in this bill did not prevent an undercount in 1990, and we must not make the same mistake for the year 2000.