

possible. By rejecting plans that had no connection to their city, the people of Round Top continue to live up to this great tradition.

Mr. Speaker, Postmaster Carol Ortiz and her community are deservingly proud of their new post office and the history behind it. As our great state continues to grow and our major cities get even larger, we would be wise to remember the people of Round Top and other such communities.

It is fitting that the new post office in the Texas town of Round Top today flies an American flag that very recently flew over our nation's capitol building.

TRIBUTE TO THE ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS DIVISION 21 AND LADIES ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS DIVISION 22

HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 22, 1999

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to invite my colleagues to pay tribute to the Ancient Order of Hibernians Division 21 and Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians Division 22 on the occasion of its Annual Hibernian Dance.

This event is not only a festive happening, it is a chance for all of us to celebrate and pay tribute to Mary Anne Kirby and Patrick (Pat) M. Moynihan who have been named as "Hibernians of the Year" by the Ancient Order of Hibernians Division 21 and Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians Division 22. This year's honorees truly represent the best of what our community has to offer.

Mary Anne Kirby, an active member of the Ladies Ancient Order of the Hibernians Division since 1980, was born in Lyrecompane, County Kerry, Ireland. After attending Renagown National School in County Kerry, Mary Anne immigrated to the Middle Village section of Queens and relocated to Rckaway Beach in 1962. Mary Anne was married on June 28, 1958 at the Resurrection Ascension Church in Rego Park to her late husband, Timothy Kirby, who was a member of the men's Ancient Order of Hibernians Division 21. With her loving husband, Mary Anne raised four wonderful children and currently takes great joy in the accomplishments of her four grandchildren.

Patrick (Pat) M. Moynihan was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1937 and is the second eldest of a family of nine. After immigrating to New York in 1957, Pat was inducted into the Army where he served with honor and distinction in the Armed Forces Medical Corps until his discharge in 1963.

Since his arrival in New York, Pat has been active in the Irish-American community. He is a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians Division 21 and has served as the group's financial secretary, treasurer, historian and president. Pat has also served the Queens County Board of Hibernians as their organizer, historian, chairman of the grievance committee, chairman of the publicity committee, recording secretary, and vice president. He has also served as the chairman of by-laws

and resolution committees at several biennial convention of the Queens County Board and has been a delegate to numerous state and national Hibernian conventions.

Both of today's honorees have long been known as innovators and beacons of good will to all those with whom they come into contact. Through their dedicated efforts, they have each helped to improve my constituents' quality of life. In recognition of their many accomplishments on behalf of my constituents, I offer my congratulations on their being honored by the Ancient Order of Hibernians Division 21 and Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians Division 22.

A TRIBUTE TO RON WOHLWEND UPON HIS RETIREMENT

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 22, 1999

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Ron Wohlwend of Morris, Illinois, as he retires from his duties as President of the Grundy County National Bank.

In 1981, Mr. Wohlwend was elected as President of the Grundy County National Bank and has maintained that position for 18 years. Mr. Wohlwend joined the Bank in 1966 where he began his career. His integral role in the Bank's activity has contributed to its reputation in the community.

Mr. Wohlwend has served the banking industry well. He has been a member of the American Bankers Association's Community Banker's Council, the Illinois Bankers Association's Board of Directors and Executive Committee. Mr. Wohlwend also was the Chairman of the Association's Federal Legislative Committee and chaired the Banker's Advisory Committee at the Graduate School of Banking at the University of Wisconsin.

Outside of the banking industry, Mr. Wohlwend has been a pillar of the city of Morris and Grundy County communities. Among the organizations Mr. Wohlwend has served are the Grundy County United Fund and the Morris Cemetery Association. He was President of the Grundy County Chamber of Commerce and served as Treasurer of Morris Community High School District #101, Saratoga Grade School District #60C, the Grundy Area Vocational Center, the Morris Cemetery Association, and the Grundy Economic Development Council. He is currently a member of the Grundy County Farm Bureau and serves on the Board of Directors of Illinois Valley Industries, the Morris Hospital Foundation, the Morris Downtown Development Partnership, Breaking Away, and the Joliet Junior College Foundation.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is fitting and appropriate to honor the achievements and years of service of Mr. Wohlwend. I wish Mr. Wohlwend's wife Jackie; his children Mary, Laura, and David; and his grandchildren Reilly and Taylor good will in the future. Also, I wish Mr. Wohlwend continued success with any future endeavors and hope he continues his leadership roles in the Morris and Grundy County communities.

IN CELEBRATION OF EARTH DAY 1999

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 22, 1999

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today and ask my colleagues to join me in a commitment to the preservation of our environment as we celebrate Earth Day 1999.

We have made great strides in the conservation of our dwindling wilderness resources. I would like to thank Forest Service Chief Michael Dombeck for his decision to halt new road construction in roadless forest areas across the United States, and for his continued leadership in the preservation of these irreplaceable resources.

As someone who cares about protecting our environment, it has been frustrating to watch my colleagues in the majority pepper appropriations bills with language which would never pass Congress on its own merits. These special interest riders historically benefit only a few wealthy landowners and private interests; they do nothing for the good of our environment.

I ask my colleagues to join me and vote against any bill that will do damage to our environment. Our policies should help us to leave a legacy of clean air and water to our children and teach them the value of leaving that legacy to their children. I would sincerely hope that my colleagues share in my concern. Otherwise, they will take their place in history as the party that allowed the destruction of our nation's greatest resources.

Let's work together to ensure an environment in which our children can thrive.

IF IT WORKS, DON'T BREAK IT

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 22, 1999

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, if it isn't broken, don't fix it. If it works, don't break it.

I'm speaking in reference to the Social Security debate. Currently, some in Congress are looking at proposals to prevent the program's anticipated bankruptcy 32 years from now. In order to buy the system a couple more years of financial solvency, some of our colleagues are considering levying a new tax on state and local government employees who are currently covered by their own pension plans. They want to force newly-hired state and local government employees who would otherwise enjoy independent pension and disability programs with good returns to participate in Social Security which offers neither security nor a good investment opportunity.

If that isn't bad enough, by mandating new state and local employees into Social Security, they will short-circuit state and local programs by shutting down the capital stream necessary to maintain current benefit levels. Mandating Social Security will, in essence, break what isn't broken while failing to fix what is.

Mr. Speaker, five million state and local employees and two million retirees are covered

by alternative plans. In Ohio, Colorado, California, Massachusetts, Nevada, Maine, Alaska, and Louisiana, over half of all state employees are covered by their own plans. In Texas and Illinois over one million employees are covered under state and local plans. Every state is impacted because about 75 percent of all public safety employees are not covered under Social Security. In Colorado there are more than 200,000 state, education, and local government employees who are outside of the federal retirement system.

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 system.

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 public 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.

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 gov-

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

ernment 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.

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 our 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.

THE MORTGAGE INTEREST DEDUCTION: A POWERFUL TOOL OF UPWARD MOBILITY

HON. KEN LUCAS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 22, 1999

Mr. LUCAS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, to so many Americans, owning a home means living the American dream. And the mortgage interest deduction has allowed so many Americans to fulfill this dream. The mortgage interest deduction and the property tax deduction have been a part of the Internal Revenue Code since its inception in 1913. It is a broad-based deduction, widely available to all taxpayers.

In 1995, of the 28 million taxpayers who used the mortgage interest deduction, 71 percent had incomes below \$75,000 and 42 percent had income below \$50,000. Sixty-seven percent of American households own their

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own home. Most of this growth is among minorities and first-time homebuyers. We must ensure that we protect and preserve the mortgage interest deduction, a powerful tool of upward mobility.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JIM NUSSLE

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 22, 1999

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday (April 20-22), I missed a series of roll call votes (Roll Call Votes No. 92-96). I had been granted a leave of absence by the House of Representatives to travel to and from, and to attend, the funeral of my grandmother. Had I been present during those votes, I would have cast my vote in the following manner:

Rollcall vote No. 92 (To suspend the rules and pass H.R. 573) 'aye' yea;

Rollcall vote No. 93 (To suspend the rules and pass H. Res. 128) 'aye' yea;

Rollcall vote No. 94 (To agree to the Conference Report to H.R. 800) 'aye' yea;

Rollcall vote No. 95 (On passage of H.R. 1184) 'aye' yea; and

Rollcall vote No. 96 (On motion to instruct conferees on H.R. 1141) 'aye' yea.

WOMEN OF THE YEAR

HON. STEVEN T. KUYKENDALL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 22, 1999

Mr. KUYKENDALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to some outstanding women from my congressional district being honored tomorrow as the South Bay Women of the Year. The honorees are Ms. Patricia Harik, Mrs. Sandra Jacobs, Ms. Carole Keen, Mrs. Fran Limbird, Mrs. Inez Van Lingen, Mrs. Aruna Roy, Dr. Patricia Sacks, and Dr. Janet Switzer. A special recognition award, called the Switzer Star, is being bestowed upon Mrs. Angie Papadakis.

This honor is given to outstanding women each year by the Switzer Center School and Clinical Services located in the city of Torrance, which serves children with learning, emotional, or social challenges. The theme of the 1999 award is Women Who Make a Difference: those who impact the lives of others, or better their communities, their businesses or simply fulfill a need. This type of philanthropic duty is truly outstanding and I am glad the Center takes time to honor these truly extraordinary individuals within our community.

This year, the Switzer Star Recipient is award-winning humorist, lecturer, and author, Mrs. Angie Papadakis. Mrs. Papadakis is a pillar in the South Bay. Currently, she is the Commissioner of the Little Hoover Commission, Commissioner of the California Nevada Super Speed Train Commission, Founder and Director of Gang Alternative Program, on the Executive Board of the Los Angeles Area Council Boy Scouts of America, Member of