

many states do not pay Social Security taxes. Because they do not pay into Social Security, teachers do not receive Social Security benefits. Instead, these teachers receive a pension from their respective State.

While retired teachers may be eligible to receive Social Security benefits as a result of previous jobs, these benefits are often greatly reduced. Further, some or all of a spouse's or widow's or widower's benefits may be offset if a retired teacher receives a pension that did not require payment of Social Security benefits.

This is why I am a cosponsor of H.R. 1217, a bill that would address the problem of reduced Social Security benefits in the case of spouses and surviving spouses who are also receiving government pensions. These would include the pensions that teachers receive from the State of Texas and other States.

H.R. 121 would modify the formula, and is currently pending in the Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Social Security.

Madam Speaker, there are 253 cosponsors of this important legislation, and I would request that this bill be moved out of committee and brought before the House for a vote.

RECKLESS USE OF STRATEGIC OIL RESERVE

(Mr. FOLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FOLEY. Madam Speaker, have you ever noticed that when you borrow money from your savings account with good intentions, it never seems to find its way back to the account? Well, that is what we are doing with the Strategic Petroleum Reserve account.

We are announcing today that in order to help oil prices, that we are going to release 30-plus million barrels of oil from that strategic reserve. The question is, when do you replace it, and how much is the cost when it is replaced?

The campaign of the Vice President is quickly running out of gas itself, so, in order to make themselves also more popular with voters, they have succumbed to a ploy that I think is reckless and dangerous. Every editorial board around the country has condemned it as a bad idea and not appropriate.

Madam Speaker, this administration sued Microsoft. They should have sued OPEC. We have got a lot of problems with price collusion. Maybe the American taxpayer would not be worrying about future energy prices or supplies if they had acted more aggressively. Here are our friends that we bailed out of the Kuwait invasion now turning against us by raising oil prices daily.

BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE

(Mr. HOLT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, yesterday the National Commission on Mathematics and Science Teaching for the 21st Century issued its report entitled "Before it's too late" on the state of math and science teaching in America. The Glenn Commission, as it has come to be known, identifies teaching as the most powerful instrument for reform in education, and thus the place to begin.

I am proud to be one of four Members of Congress selected to serve on the Glenn Commission, which was chaired by former senator and astronaut John Glenn.

As the report concludes, we must significantly increase the number of teachers who feel qualified to teach math and science, and change the environment of professional development to create an ongoing system of improvement in our schools.

Teaching our children math and science is important for economic productivity and national security. It is also important at an even more profound level than the practical benefits to our economy.

Math and science bring order and harmony and balance to our lives. They teach us that our world is not capricious, but predictable, that it contains pattern and logic. They also provide us with foundational skills for lifelong learning, for creating progress itself.

HOLDING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ACCOUNTABLE

(Mr. SCHAFFER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SCHAFFER. Madam Speaker, America's children deserve the world's best education, but they are not getting it. Even though the Federal Government has spent over \$100 billion annually on education, 40 percent of our Nation's fourth graders fall below the basic level of reading achievement.

Madam Speaker, it is little wonder the Department of Education has mismanaged and lost billions of taxpayer dollars, and millions more have been literally stolen from Department office buildings, stolen from America's children. The Department of Education cannot account for how it spent nearly \$32 billion in taxpayer funds.

Since 1983, more than 20 million students have reached their senior year unable to do basic math, and it all seems to have gone unnoticed by the Department of Education. The Department does not expect to pass audits for at least 2 more years.

Madam Speaker, it is time that the Department of Education is held ac-

countable for how it spends our money. The Clinton-Gore administration has been in office for 8 years, and they squandered their opportunity to help.

Republicans believe no child should be left behind.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

(Ms. WOOLSEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, many, many of our seniors must choose between buying food and buying medicine every day and every week of their lives, and we know that that is not right. But what are we doing about it? What are we doing in this Congress as we come to the end of the 106th Congress?

My Republican colleagues would suggest that private insurance companies take over this issue, but from 1995 to 1999 this country has doubled what is spent on prescription drugs, from \$65 billion a year to \$125 billion a year.

Prescriptions are a fact of life. Do we really believe that private insurers are willing to take on the burden of 18 prescription drugs on average per year for a senior citizen? Of course not. If it were at all profitable, private insurers would already be all over this market.

Instead, we need to expand Medicare. We need to include the guaranteed prescription drug benefits through a good program that has been working for us for 30 years.

101ST ANNIVERSARY OF VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

(Ms. PRYCE of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Madam Speaker, on the evening of September 29, 1899, 13 men gathered in a tailor's shop at 286 East Main Street in Columbus, Ohio. They were all veterans of the U.S. 17th Infantry Regiment who had fought in Cuba during the Spanish-American War. They gathered to remember those killed in action, to assist their surviving brothers, and to care for the families of those who had died. This meeting formed the foundation of an order, which we know today as the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

While the total significance of this first meeting was unknown to these 13 veterans, without a question, the VFW's actions have left an indelible mark on the last 100 years of our Nation's proud history.

Madam Speaker, tomorrow I will have the distinct privilege and honor to unveil an historic marker at the very site where the VFW was born, exactly 101 years ago in Columbus. As a sponsor of this historic marker, I am proud that we will be commemorating