

much of his personal life for the Committee. He possesses a sharp wit and a quick mind. He is a true gentleman in every sense, and a wonderful human being. Pete is a fine leader and helped me assemble an outstanding staff which has, for the most part, remained with the Committee during both his tenures.

As he leaves the Hill for the second time, he does so with the gratitude of his Chairman and all the members of the Ways and Means Committee with whom he has worked. He will be greatly missed, but he can derive great satisfaction in the knowledge of his contribution to the Committee, the House of Representatives, and his beloved country.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION PREPAREDNESS ACT OF 2000

HON. E. CLAY SHAW, JR.

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 11, 2000

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to modernize and strengthen the Social Security Administration in preparation for the oncoming baby boom retirement. This legislation completes the spirit of the laws Congress has enacted three times since 1983—taking the last of Social Security expenditures off-budget and removing SSA's administrative funds from budgetary restraints which have nothing to do with Social Security's needs.

In preparation for the upcoming retirement wave, Congress and the administration clearly want Social Security resources dedicated only to Social Security to ensure promised benefits are paid. Ensuring responsive public service delivery by the Social Security Administration is part of that promise because worker's hard-earned payroll taxes directly support the running of the agency.

A recent report by the bipartisan Social Security Advisory Board concluded

There is a significant gap between the level of services that the public needs and that which the Agency is providing. Moreover, this gap could grow to far larger proportions in the long term if it is not adequately addressed.

This world-class delivery of services will become more difficult as the baby boom generation enters its peak disability years and then reaches retirement age starting in 2008. By 2010 Social Security retirement benefit claims are expected to rise by 16 percent and disability claims by 47 percent. For an agency facing a substantial number of retirements in its own workforce and high expectations from its customers, that's a great challenge.

It may come as a surprise to both Congress and to Americans that part of Social Security is not wholly separated from the federal budget, but it is not. The administrative costs of running the agency and paying benefits are subject to discretionary spending caps—an on-budget restraint that could keep that agency from preparing for the challenge it will soon face as the baby boomers retire and disability cases soar.

Subjecting the agency's administrative funding to the caps really doesn't make sense.

After all, these costs are paid for with workers' payroll taxes from the Social Security Trust Fund—they are not paid for with general revenues. When these payroll taxes are used to pay benefits, they are considered off budget and not subject to the caps. But when the exact same payroll taxes are used to pay the administrative costs that support benefit payments, they are treated differently.

Mr. Speaker, my bill creates a new cap for SSA's administrative appropriations for the two remaining years the caps exist. This is not unprecedented. Congress felt that Social Security's responsibility to do Continuing Disability Reviews was so important, that it exempted those management costs many years ago. Since no caps exist after fiscal year 2002, Social Security administrative expenses will then go off-budget like the rest of the program.

However, to insure the public gets the service they paid for, my legislation still requires the Social Security Administration to go through the appropriations process and to defend that request to both the appropriations and authorizing committees.

Each year, new funding requests will be reviewed based upon the Commissioner's documentation that current and future tax dollars are meeting the mission and performance levels contained in the Agency's Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Plan. Open ended funding without results is not an option. Continued delivery of world-class service, along with ongoing progress on eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse will be demanded first.

I also want the Social Security Administration to be a fully integrated member of the new information age, so my bill provides for technology investment. The agency must submit a comprehensive procurement plan detailing the benefits, risks and returns from the investment. This plan will be updated biannually and GAO will provide the Congress with their assessment and recommendation on SSA's performance to guide our funding decisions.

The way to prepare Social Security for the future is to start now. We have committed ourselves to saving Social Security. Just as important must be our commitment to save the underlying program operation so critical in delivering the service needed by retirees, individuals with disabilities, and their families.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my Ways and Means colleague, Mr. CARDIN, for joining me as an original sponsor of this bill and note that this represents another bipartisan effort to strengthen the Social Security program for current and future retirees. I urge all my colleagues to cosponsor this important, bipartisan legislation.

THE GREATEST GENERATION

HON. HELEN CHENOWETH-HAGE

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 11, 2000

Mrs. CHENOWETH-HAGE. Mr. Speaker, most of America's soldiers are just ordinary people. They are people from all walks of life who are sometimes asked to do extraordinary things. Those of us who haven't served in the armed forces will never know the pain they

suffer or the hardships they can be asked to endure.

However, I do want them to know the depth of our gratitude.

For this reason, I'm happy to share with my colleagues a speech by Kootenai County Commissioner Ron Rankin entitled "The Greatest Generation," which emphasizes the sacrifices made by the World War II generation. He calls them this because they lived up to the challenges forced upon them by both our country's worst depression and our greatest war.

Commissioner Rankin knows the sacrifices made by this generation. He learned this as a Marine fighting the Communists and the violent seas at Incheon, Korea. We can never thank this generation enough, but I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to both Commissioner Rankin and the American servicemen who so bravely served our country. They met the challenges forced upon them in our country's hour of need.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I commend the example of Ron Rankin to my colleagues, and hereby submit to the RECORD for their consideration "The Greatest Generation" speech.

GREATEST GENERATION

(By Ron Rankin)

Fellow Veterans—Families and Friends of the Greatest Generation: In December of 1776, just five months after the Declaration of Independence had been signed and the thirteen colonies were swept up in the American Revolution, Thomas Paine wrote, "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands now deserves the love and thanks of all men and women."

We . . . American's . . . greatest generation . . . are gathered here today to remember all of those great patriots who stood fast and held the line against tyranny, from the bridge at Concord to the sands of the Persian Gulf, and to say thank you . . . for without their courage, their dedication and their willingness to die for what was right, we would not be here today.

I didn't serve in the Navy but many of my Marine Corps brothers would not be here today were it not for Navy ships bombarding the beaches before the troops landed . . . and for the ships that shelled the enemy lines . . . directed by forward observers on the ground—miles from the ships that targeted the enemy with surgical precision.

Fifty years ago this very week, I climbed down the nets at the Incheon Landing executed by the Navy, fighting 30-foot tides, a landing which became an epic in Navy and Marine Corps history.

Until Korea, my first-hand knowledge of the Navy was troop ships, LST's and LCT's. Later in Korea, two regiments of the First Marine Division were completely surrounded by over 100 thousand Chinese troops on the top of icy mountains at the Chosin reservoir, 78 miles from the sea. . . Ten divisions of Chinese troops had determined to annihilate our Division. We survived, thanks in part to the constant, dawn to dark napalming of our perimeters by fighters many from carriers off the coast . . . keeping the Communist troops at bay while we regrouped for—our bloody fight to the sea.

My fellow Marines and I—members of the "Chosin Few"—owe an everlasting debt of gratitude to the heroes of the United States Navy for our survival. . . Our bond with the