

June 21, 2000

INTRODUCTION OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY PROTECTION, PRESERVATION, AND REFORM COMMISSION ACT OF 2000

**HON. JIM SAXTON**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 21, 2000*

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the introduction of my bill in the House that puts partisan politics aside and ensures Social Security is preserved for our seniors today and in the future.

We've all heard about the economic outlook for the Social Security program. We must be concerned. By 2037, the trust funds of the Social Security program will be depleted, jeopardizing the retirement security of future retirees.

And while 2037 sounds far away, it will be here before we know it. With each passing session in Congress, the opportunity to work towards a meaningful solution to the financial woes of our nation's retirement program slips through our fingers.

Political rhetoric has worked its way into the debate over preserving Social Security. The time has come to separate politics from the substance of this important debate. We must put the financial security of our nation's retirees first, instead of allowing politics between our two parties to get in the way. Working together to protect Social Security will be essential if we are to find a sensible solution to preserving the future of the most critical pillar of retirement security.

This bill outlines objectives for comprehensive reform of the Social Security system and establishes a bipartisan Congressional Commission to develop a reform plan consistent with those objectives.

Specifically, this legislation sets forth six broad objectives for Social Security reform, including (1) beneficiaries must receive the benefits to which they are entitled based on a fair and equitable reform of the system, (2) long-term solvency of the system must be guaranteed for at least 75 years, (3) every generation of workers must be guaranteed a reasonable rate of return on their payroll tax contributions, (4) all workers must be given the opportunity to share in the nation's economic prosperity through participation in a private investment account within the Social Security system, (5) Social Security Trust Funds must be protected from congressional or other efforts to spend on non-Social Security purposes, and (6) Non-Social Security surplus revenues must be available to shore up the system while implementing reform.

Also, the bill establishes a 13-member Social Security Protection, Preservation, and Reform Commission charged with developing a legislative proposal for comprehensive reform of the Social Security system, consistent with the objectives stated in the bill. This Commission is composed of 12 voting Congressional Members, equally divided between Republicans and Democrats. The members would include the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the Senate Finance and House Ways and Means Committees, and two Congressional appointees each by the Speaker and the Mi-

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

11845

nority Leader in the House and the Majority and Minority Leaders in the Senate. The Commissioner of Social Security would also serve as a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Commission.

In order to ensure Congress doesn't continue to drag its feet on this issue, the bill requires the Commission to submit a detailed legislative proposal to Congress by September 2001 and includes a process for expedited Congressional action on the Commission's recommendations by the end of next year.

The concept is simple: principles and process for Social Security reform. This bill focuses on the goals we want to achieve in any proposal that protects Social Security while ensuring action is taken in an expedient matter. It forces Congress to forget about the politics and concentrate on what matters most: safeguarding Social Security for our nation's retirees. With this plan, we can work together and concentrate on what's best for the millions of Americans who depend on our nation's retirement system.

Retirees don't need political rhetoric; they need a Social Security system they can depend on. For this reason, I am honored that Representatives NEIL ABERCROMBIE (D-HI) and MARK SANFORD (R-SC) have joined me in supporting this legislation. Together, we can work in a bipartisan fashion and find a sensible solution to the financial problems of the Social Security program once and for all.

HONORING VERONICA MACKENZIE FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE ON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT

**HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 21, 2000*

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to join Area Cooperative Educational Services [ACES] in paying tribute to Veronica MacKenzie as she celebrates her retirement. For over three decades, Ronnie has dedicated herself to ensuring that the special needs children of the Greater New Haven area have access to a quality education.

I have often spoke of our nation's need for talented, creative, enthusiastic teachers who are ready to help our children learn and grow. Ronnie is just that kind of educator. Throughout her career, she has touched the lives of thousands of young people. Ronnie's career began as a special education teacher at Jerome Harrison in North Branford, Connecticut. For over two decades, Ronnie has worked at ACES, an exceptional organization which has strived to meet the challenges of special needs students. As the Coordinator of the Academy since 1990, Ronnie has been instrumental in creating a supportive environment where children with disabilities can realize their potential and build a strong foundation for their future success.

Before the U.S. Supreme Court acted to protect their basic freedoms, hundreds of thousands of disabled children received no formal education at all because they were

deemed unable to learn. We should never go back to a time when the potential of so many bright young people, with so much to offer, was squandered due to a lack of understanding. Ronnie has been an unparalleled advocate for these children—giving them a strong voice and the opportunity to learn and thrive. With thirty-two years in special education, Ronnie is a true model, not only to her students, but to us all.

I have always held a deep respect and tremendous admiration for our nation's educators. The commitment and dedication that Ronnie has demonstrated is remarkable and I applaud her many contributions to our community. I am proud to stand today to join with the friends, family, and colleagues who have gathered this evening to recognize her outstanding accomplishments and to celebrate her retirement. Ronnie has indeed become an irreplaceable member of our community. I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation for her many years of service to the children of our community, as well as my best wishes for continued health and happiness.

TRIBUTE TO VIDLER'S 5 & 10

**HON. JACK QUINN**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 21, 2000*

Mr. QUINN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today to pay tribute and officially recognize the Seventieth Anniversary of the Vidler's 5 & 10 store in historic East Aurora, which I'm proud to say is part of the Thirtieth Congressional District of the State of New York.

On June 21, 1930, Mr. Robert S. Vidler opened his store on Main Street in East Aurora, in the midst of the Great Depression. Despite those humble beginnings, Vidler's has become a landmark in the quaint village of East Aurora, and is yet another fine example of the proud tradition and heritage of our Western New York community.

Throughout the past seventy years, this terrific store has served as a shining example of the small-town family businesses that our Nation was founded upon.

Currently owned and operated by Mr. Vidler's two sons, Ed and Bob. Not only has this great store survived these many years, it has prospered. Today's Vidler's is about ten times as big as the original, and continues to thrive in this vibrant community.

The store occupies four connected, vintage 1890 buildings on two levels. It offers an eclectic blend of merchandise that ranges from the nostalgic to the very latest. It's famous red and white awning is a common stop for area tourists seeking a shopping experience like those of the past in the many "five and dime" stores across the country.

As Members of Congress, we pause to honor and recognize those family businesses whose proud history of dedicated service and commitment have helped to strengthen our communities. I'm pleased to include this fine business as among our very best.

Mr. Speaker, today I join with the Village of East Aurora, the Vidler Family, and indeed, our entire Western New York community in