

March 21, 2001

RAILROAD RETIREMENT AND SURVIVORS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2001

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2001

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure in introducing the "Railroad Retirement and Survivors' Improvement Act of 2001" today.

In the Third District of West Virginia, we have 8,300 citizens who will benefit from this bill, which ranks southern West Virginia seventh in the United States.

The bill we are introducing today will double benefits for widows of railroad retirees, reduce the retirement age from 62 to 60 years of age with 30 years of service, and allow a person to be vested in the system after five years of service, rather than 10 years, as currently required.

No taxpayers' dollars will be used to finance these railroad retirement benefits, which are paid by employer and employee taxes.

This bill includes the exact provisions of H.R. 4844, which I helped to write last year, and which passed the House by an overwhelming vote of 391-25 on September 7, 2000. However, the Senate did not act on the bill.

The bill is a product of two years of negotiation between management of the railroad industry and railroad workers. As last year's vote demonstrates, the bill has strong bipartisan support. I will work to bring the bill to the House floor for a vote, and I expect to see the same strong support as last year.

Once this bill becomes law, it will enable railroad retirees and widows to enjoy a better quality of life, by receiving the increased benefits which they deserve. They spent their working lives paying into their retirement and they deserve to reap decent benefits.

PREVENT CHILD ABUSE—N.J.
APRIL BLUE RIBBON CAMPAIGN

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2001

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleagues that the month of April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. Throughout the month, thousands and perhaps millions of individuals from around the country who are working to reduce child abuse will be wearing blue ribbons to draw attention to this monumental national concern.

Prevent Child Abuse—New Jersey is undertaking the blue ribbon campaign in my state with a kickoff event on March 28.

This organization serves as a national model for how a statewide group can make a difference in combatting a serious social problem.

By establishing local partnerships, PCA-NJ helps communities, strengthens families and supports parents through parenting programs,

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

education and training, advocacy and public awareness programs.

Valuable PCA-NJ programs include the Parent Linking Project, which provides comprehensive services to teen parents and their children at school; Healthy Families, under which intensive, home visitation services are provided to overburdened parents of newborns; Every Person Influences Children, which sponsors parent education workshops for parents and training for teachers to incorporate life skills and character education into daily curricula, and the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Initiative, which undertakes case management and counseling programs for teens to build self esteem and help them make healthy choices.

In addition to the Blue Ribbon Campaign, PCA-NJ also sponsors many public education and community awareness efforts, including a speakers' bureau, loaned materials under the New Jersey Parenting Education Resource Center (PERC); and a web site and 800 number for information and other resources.

Mr. Speaker, in New Jersey, each year, over 80,000 calls are made to the N.J. Division of Youth and Family Services by concerned citizens and professionals reporting suspected child abuse and neglect. This figure for just one state gives us an idea of the extent of this shameful problem in our country—the most advanced, educated and prosperous nation in the world. It is my hope that drawing attention to this problem, as we are doing in New Jersey and around the country with the Blue Ribbon Campaign, will eventually and dramatically reduce the incidence of child abuse.]

HONORING THE LATE DOCTOR
JESSE W. AUSTIN

HON. CHARLES W. "CHIP" PICKERING

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2001

Mr. PICKERING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the late Doctor Jesse W. Austin, Sr., a constituent of mine who passed away on Monday, February 12, 2001, at his residence in Forest, Mississippi. Dr. Austin, affectionately known as "Doctor Bill", was 84 years of age at the time of his death and had been a practicing physician in the City of Forest and Scott County for more than 39 years.

Doctor Bill was born in Osyka, Mississippi in 1916 but moved to Forest in 1924. He graduated from Forest High School in 1934, Mississippi State University in 1938, and Tulane Medical School in 1942. Shortly after graduating from Tulane, Doctor Bill entered the United States Army and served with the U.S. 3rd Army in Europe as a Battalion Surgeon. He participated in 5 major battles which began with the Normandy Invasion and ended in Yugoslavia on VE Day. Doctor Bill's service decorations included the Silver Star, two Bronze Stars, and the Purple Heart. At the Battle of the Bulge, he was known as the "Battling Surgeon."

Upon returning from Service in 1945, Doctor Bill began his medical practice with his father, Doctor R.B. Austin, II. At that time, most pa-

tient care was done either at the patient's home or in the doctor's office. It was not unusual for Doctor Bill to spend most of his day making house calls and treating patients. He had a bedside manner with his patients that truly reflected his love and concern for their well-being. Because of his caring attitude, Doctor Bill endeared himself to all the residents of Forest and Scott County that lasted until his final day of life. During his medical career, Doctor Bill delivered more than 3500 babies, most of whom were born at home.

Doctor Bill served as the first president of the Mississippi Chapter of the Battle of the Bulge Veterans. It was he who stepped forward in 1994 to provide the leadership to form the state's first Battle of the Bulge Veterans group and helped organize the inaugural meeting of the group in Forest. He was a member of the Forest United Methodist Church and was an ardent Mississippi State University supporter. He was also a member and past president of the Central Medical Society. Doctor Bill was active in civic affairs and he and his wife were honored as Forest's "Citizens of the Year" and named grand marshals of the Christmas Parade in 1984.

Doctor David Lee, a medical colleague of Doctor Bill said that "he was one of the best general practitioners I've known. He was one of the most dedicated doctor I've been associated with." Doctor Howard Clark, a physician from Morton, Mississippi said both Doctor Bill and his father were wonderful doctors stating, "They were down-to-earth, ethical, people loving doctors." Sid Salter, editor of the Scott County Times said, "Doctor Bill died as he lived—a well loved and respected man. He did not talk patriotism, he lived it. He did not talk of healing. He used his head, heart and hands to bring it about in his fellow man regardless of their race, creed, color, or economic status. He did not speak of his service to mankind. He simply rendered it day by day."

Doctor Bill is survived by his wife Opal, daughters Sue Thigpen and Judy Webb, sons J. W. "Ace" Richard and Terry, their husband and wives, 14 grandchildren, 1 great grandchild, and many nieces and nephews. Doctor Bill was a great man. He loved the Lord, his family, his friends, his country, his state, and by all means Forest and Scott County. He served others to the best of his ability. It is my honor to pay tribute and express my appreciation and that of the 3rd Congressional District of Mississippi for his life of service and contributions to the betterment of our nation and all mankind.

SUN CHRONICLE IS RIGHT ON THE
MONEY REGARDING NURSING
HOMES

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2001

Mr. FRANK. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, March 10, an editorial in the Sun Chronicle, published in Attleboro, Massachusetts, accurately analyzed one of the major causes for the difficulties we are facing in providing decent nursing home care. As the editorial notes,

"the main problem can be traced back the Balanced Budget Act of 1997." As the Sun Chronicle editorial writers note, today, "patients sit neglected in nursing homes, . . . meanwhile the federal and state governments—both enjoying budget surpluses—pay the nursing homes less than it costs to take care of patients."

It is disgraceful in this wealthy nation for us to allow this situation to continue. We allocate far too little of our great wealth to pay the hard working people who provide essential nursing home services, and the consequence is that we do not provide these services nearly as well as we should. I was delighted to read this forceful, thoughtful, persuasive editorial in the Sun Chronicle and I ask that it be shared here.

[From the Sun Chronicle, Mar. 10, 2001]
NURSING HOME NEGLECT IN AN AGE OF
SURPLUSES

What's wrong with this picture?

Patients sit neglected in nursing homes, wounds soaking through bandages, food growing cold before feeding help arrives, sheets smelling of urine. Administrators can't fill aide positions and nurses leave for higher-paying jobs.

Meanwhile, the federal and state governments—both enjoying budget surpluses—pay the nursing homes less than it costs to take care of patients.

This fractured picture is all too real, as the Sun Chronicle's Rick Thurmond reported in last Sunday's edition.

The only thing that explains this unconscionable situation is politics—and only politics can fix it.

The main problem can be traced back to the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, enacted to counteract federal deficits and eventually bring the budget into balance.

Thanks to the surging economy, that day arrived far sooner than expected, and now such a big surplus is projected that a major tax cut is supported by both parties.

The Medicare cuts in the Balanced Budget Act, while softened last fall, continue—placing nursing home companies in an impossible position.

The government pays for 80 percent of nursing home patients. In Massachusetts, Medicaid provides about \$130 a day for patients, while the costs are about \$150.

The result is such low salaries that the homes have difficulty keeping aides and professionals alike, with a direct impact on patient care and comfort.

But even keeping salaries low isn't doing it for nursing homes. A number have closed, including Sheldonville Nursing Home in Wrentham and Van Dora Nursing Home in Foxboro. One-fourth of the state's nursing homes face bankruptcy.

Obviously, the answer is money, and the money is there. The question is whether it will be a priority.

Local congressman James McGovern and Barney Frank voted against the Balanced Budget Act and have fought to restore Medicare cuts. We hope the next federal budget, drawing on the burgeoning surplus, will do more for a vulnerable elderly population than have recent budgets.

At the state level, a small step has been taken in approval of two years of wage supplements for nursing home workers. Another state bill has been introduced to boost nursing home reimbursements, but the sponsor has expressed concern that the state income tax cut approved by voters last year will make funds hard to come by.

Obviously, the state tax cut and the coming federal tax cut will increase competition for funding but they should not prevent it.

The sorry picture of nursing home care today can be improved. The means are there. What's needed is the will.

TRIBUTE TO THE NASA GLENN RESEARCH CENTER

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2001

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of my colleagues an article published in the Continental March 2001 magazine that highlights the achievements of the NASA Glenn Research Center over the past 60 years. Revolutionary advancements in aerospace and aviation technologies have been developed at the NASA Glenn Research Center (GRC), which is located in my congressional district in Cleveland, OH. This article highlights Glenn's contributions to aviation, which include research to create quieter, non-polluting airplanes. In addition, it details the GRC's work in developing a power system used on the International Space Station and how their research is used to improve commercial products in the United States.

NASA Glenn Research Center continues to play an instrumental role in maintaining our Nation's leadership in aeronautics and aerospace technology. In the future the center will continue to make groundbreaking discoveries that will improve both space travel and life on Earth.

[From the Continental, March 2001]

REACHING FOR THE STARS

(By Todd Wilkinson)

On airy moonlit nights, stargazers in the Northern Hemisphere may notice what appears to be a glowing white speck making regular passes through the sky. It's not a UFO they are seeing or even the pulses of a meteor shower. That piece of metallic glitter is actually a massive human stepping-stone to the cosmos—the new International Space Station—orbiting 220 miles above the earth and taking shape as a base camp for the future exploration of our solar system.

Back on the ground, scientists and biomedical researchers from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) are paying special attention to the space station's evolving construction from laboratories located in Cleveland. That's right, Cleveland. As in Ohio. The city pressed up against the southern shore of Lake Erie.

Surprising to many is that quietly over the past half-century some of the most revolutionary advancements in space and aviation technology have been developed at Lewis Field. The Glenn Research Center here, named in honor of the pioneering astronaut and U.S. senator, John Glenn, is perhaps the most unsung of NASA's 10 major campuses. Less known than the Johnson Space Center in Houston or the Kennedy launch pads at Cape Canaveral, Fla., or the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif., NASA Glenn is, nonetheless, playing a pivotal role in transforming the agency's 11th and most novel facility—the space station—from a pie-in-the-sky dream into a symbol of 21st-century ingenuity. And it is giving Cleveland

and numerous partner businesses and local universities a tangible connection to the frontier of space.

The NASA Glenn Campus is a labyrinth of six wind tunnels and more than 150 buildings, along with a beehive of laboratories. Since the early 1940s, around the time America entered World War II, the research facilities have been central to the development of jet engines that are today the foundation of commercial and military aviation. But in 1961, when President John F. Kennedy set U.S. sights on the moon, the laboratories also became nurseries for rocket propulsion in the race to space, notes Donald Campbell, director of the Glenn Research Center.

Better than any political leader in the country, Senator Glenn has understood the dividends accrued from public investment in technology. During recent heated debates in Congress over funding for NASA and concerns about cost overruns that have dogged the space station, it was Glenn who urged colleagues to support research and development in emerging technologies. If the United States is to maintain a competitive edge over other nations, he argued, it must sustain and nurture institutions like NASA.

Campbell says NASA Glenn channels much of its research-driven technology into U.S. industry, enabling major advances in commercial products like jet engines and communications satellites. During the 1970s and 1980s, NASA spent about \$200 million on turbine engine technologies developed by Glenn and its commercial partners. In turn, that investment yielded billions of dollars in benefits for the U.S. economy, through job creation and spin-off technologies, including the eventual production of the General Electric 90 engine—the workhorse of many planes. "Engine propulsion technology has historically led the development of new generations of aircraft design, and that shows no signs of changing," says Joe Shaw, chief of NASA Glenn's ultraefficient engine technology program. "More and more we are seeing a cross pollination of ideas between the dual missions of NASA—its support of aeronautics for commercial and military purposes and exploration of space."

Likewise, the quest to build more powerful and efficient spacecraft reaped incredible dividends. "It's hard to tell what could come out of our space research that will affect our lives on the ground," Shaw says. "I don't think anybody with the Apollo program knew it would lead to the proliferation of personal laptop computers and digital wristwatches and microbiological sensors."

Not far off on the horizon, Shaw says, are aircraft that will burn dramatically cleaner fuel, reducing carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions that contribute to global warming and smog. Those same planes will boast engines that are barely audible to the human ear on the ground once the planes are beyond airport boundaries. Yet the biggest advancement that could arrive in less than a generation will be fleets of "smart airplanes," whose computer systems adjust engines in flight to make them fly more efficiently. And where commercial flights are concerned, efficiency results in the need for less fuel. Ultimately, that would mean better bargains for travelers. An ambitious goal of NASA Glenn scientists is to reduce the travel time to the Far East and Europe by half within the next 25 years, but to also make it possible at today's ticket prices.

Last September, R&D Magazine named three research teams based at Glenn winners of its prestigious R&D 100 Award, known within the industry as the "Nobel Prize of