

groups, and advocates for individuals with disabilities. I'm pleased we were able to work together to get to this point.

In particular, I would like to thank the members of the Employer and Disability Alliance, including the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the Epilepsy Foundation, the American Association of People with Disabilities, the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, HR Policy Association, the National Association of Manufacturers, and the Society for Human Resource Management for their hard work and long hours of negotiation with each other and with our staff.

Of course, much credit is due to Majority Leader HOYER and Congressman SENSENBRENNER for their leadership and tenacity in the House; and Senator HARKIN, Senator KENNEDY and Senator HATCH for their skill in moving this legislation through the Senate with unanimous support.

It is time to restore the original intent of the ADA and ensure that the tens of millions of Americans with disabilities who want to work, attend school, and fully participate in our communities will have the chance to do so.

I look forward to passage of this legislation. The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time has expired.

The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 3406.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SSI EXTENSION FOR ELDERLY AND DISABLED REFUGEES ACT

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill (H.R. 2608) to amend section 402 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 to provide, in fiscal years 2008 through 2010, extensions of supplemental security income for refugees, asylees, and certain other humanitarian immigrants, and to amend the Internal Revenue Code to collect unemployment compensation debts resulting from fraud.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the Senate amendments is as follows:

Senate amendments:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "SSI Extension for Elderly and Disabled Refugees Act".

SEC. 2. SSI EXTENSIONS FOR HUMANITARIAN IMMIGRANTS.

Section 402(a)(2) of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (8 U.S.C. 1612(a)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(M) SSI EXTENSIONS THROUGH FISCAL YEAR 2011.—

"(i) TWO-YEAR EXTENSION FOR CERTAIN ALIENS AND VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING.—

"(I) IN GENERAL.—Subject to clause (ii), with respect to eligibility for benefits under subparagraph (A) for the specified Federal program described in paragraph (3)(A) of qualified aliens (as defined in section 431(b)) and victims of trafficking in persons (as defined in section 107(b)(1)(C) of division A of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-386) or as granted status under section 101(a)(15)(T)(ii) of the Immigration and Nationality Act), the 7-year period described in subparagraph (A) shall be deemed to be a 9-year period during fiscal years 2009 through 2011 in the case of such a qualified alien or victim of trafficking who furnishes to the Commissioner of Social Security the declaration required under subclause (IV) (if applicable) and is described in subclause (III).

"(II) ALIENS AND VICTIMS WHOSE BENEFITS CEASED IN PRIOR FISCAL YEARS.—Subject to clause (ii), beginning on the date of the enactment of the SSI Extension for Elderly and Disabled Refugees Act, any qualified alien (as defined in section 431(b)) or victim of trafficking in persons (as defined in section 107(b)(1)(C) of division A of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-386) or as granted status under section 101(a)(15)(T)(ii) of the Immigration and Nationality Act) rendered ineligible for the specified Federal program described in paragraph (3)(A) during the period beginning on August 22, 1996, and ending on September 30, 2008, solely by reason of the termination of the 7-year period described in subparagraph (A) shall be eligible for such program for an additional 2-year period in accordance with this clause, if such qualified alien or victim of trafficking meets all other eligibility factors under title XVI of the Social Security Act, furnishes to the Commissioner of Social Security the declaration required under subclause (IV) (if applicable), and is described in subclause (III).

"(III) ALIENS AND VICTIMS DESCRIBED.—For purposes of subclauses (I) and (II), a qualified alien or victim of trafficking described in this subclause is an alien or victim who—

"(aa) has been a lawful permanent resident for less than 6 years and such status has not been abandoned, rescinded under section 246 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, or terminated through removal proceedings under section 240 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, and the Commissioner of Social Security has verified such status, through procedures established in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security;

"(bb) has filed an application, within 4 years from the date the alien or victim began receiving supplemental security income benefits, to become a lawful permanent resident with the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the Commissioner of Social Security has verified, through procedures established in consultation with such Secretary, that such application is pending;

"(cc) has been granted the status of Cuban and Haitian entrant, as defined in section 501(e) of the Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-422), for purposes of the specified Federal program described in paragraph (3)(A);

"(dd) has had his or her deportation withheld by the Secretary of Homeland Security under section 243(h) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (as in effect immediately before the effective date of section 307 of division C of Public Law 104-208), or whose removal is withheld under section 241(b)(3) of such Act;

"(ee) has not attained age 18; or

"(ff) has attained age 70.

"(IV) DECLARATION REQUIRED.—

"(aa) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of subclauses (I) and (II), the declaration required under this subclause of a qualified alien or victim of trafficking described in either such subclause is a declaration under penalty of perjury stating that the alien or victim has made a good faith effort to pursue United States citizenship, as determined by the Secretary of Homeland Security. The Commissioner of Social Security shall develop criteria as needed, in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security, for consideration of such declarations.

"(bb) EXCEPTION FOR CHILDREN.—A qualified alien or victim of trafficking described in subclause (I) or (II) who has not attained age 18 shall not be required to furnish to the Commissioner of Social Security a declaration described in item (aa) as a condition of being eligible for the specified Federal program described in paragraph (3)(A) for an additional 2-year period in accordance with this clause.

"(V) PAYMENT OF BENEFITS TO ALIENS WHOSE BENEFITS CEASED IN PRIOR FISCAL YEARS.—Benefits paid to a qualified alien or victim described in subclause (II) shall be paid prospectively over the duration of the qualified alien's or victim's renewed eligibility.

"(ii) SPECIAL RULE IN CASE OF PENDING OR APPROVED NATURALIZATION APPLICATION.—With respect to eligibility for benefits for the specified program described in paragraph (3)(A), paragraph (1) shall not apply during fiscal years 2009 through 2011 to an alien described in one of clauses (i) through (v) of subparagraph (A) or a victim of trafficking in persons (as defined in section 107(b)(1)(C) of division A of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-386) or as granted status under section 101(a)(15)(T)(ii) of the Immigration and Nationality Act), if such alien or victim (including any such alien or victim rendered ineligible for the specified Federal program described in paragraph (3)(A) during the period beginning on August 22, 1996, and ending on September 30, 2008, solely by reason of the termination of the 7-year period described in subparagraph (A)) has filed an application for naturalization that is pending before the Secretary of Homeland Security or a United States district court based on section 336(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, or has been approved for naturalization but not yet sworn in as a United States citizen, and the Commissioner of Social Security has verified, through procedures established in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security, that such application is pending or has been approved."

SEC. 3. COLLECTION OF UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION DEBTS RESULTING FROM FRAUD.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 6402 of the Internal Revenue Code (relating to authority to make credits or refunds) is amended by redesignating subsections (f) through (k) as subsections (g) through (l), respectively, and by inserting after subsection (e) the following new subsection:

"(f) COLLECTION OF UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION DEBTS RESULTING FROM FRAUD.—

"(I) IN GENERAL.—Upon receiving notice from any State that a named person owes a covered unemployment compensation debt to such State, the Secretary shall, under such conditions as may be prescribed by the Secretary—

"(A) reduce the amount of any overpayment payable to such person by the amount of such covered unemployment compensation debt;

"(B) pay the amount by which such overpayment is reduced under subparagraph (A) to such State and notify such State of such person's name, taxpayer identification number, address, and the amount collected; and

"(C) notify the person making such overpayment that the overpayment has been reduced by an amount necessary to satisfy a covered unemployment compensation debt.

If an offset is made pursuant to a joint return, the notice under subparagraph (C) shall include information related to the rights of a spouse of a person subject to such an offset.

“(2) PRIORITIES FOR OFFSET.—Any overpayment by a person shall be reduced pursuant to this subsection—

“(A) after such overpayment is reduced pursuant to—

“(i) subsection (a) with respect to any liability for any internal revenue tax on the part of the person who made the overpayment;

“(ii) subsection (c) with respect to past-due support; and

“(iii) subsection (d) with respect to any past-due, legally enforceable debt owed to a Federal agency; and

“(B) before such overpayment is credited to the future liability for any Federal internal revenue tax of such person pursuant to subsection (b).

If the Secretary receives notice from a State or States of more than one debt subject to paragraph (1) or subsection (e) that is owed by a person to such State or States, any overpayment by such person shall be applied against such debts in the order in which such debts accrued.

“(3) OFFSET PERMITTED ONLY AGAINST RESIDENTS OF STATE SEEKING OFFSET.—Paragraph (1) shall apply to an overpayment by any person for a taxable year only if the address shown on the Federal return for such taxable year of the overpayment is an address within the State seeking the offset.

“(4) NOTICE; CONSIDERATION OF EVIDENCE.—No State may take action under this subsection until such State—

“(A) notifies by certified mail with return receipt the person owing the covered unemployment compensation debt that the State proposes to take action pursuant to this section;

“(B) provides such person at least 60 days to present evidence that all or part of such liability is not legally enforceable or due to fraud;

“(C) considers any evidence presented by such person and determines that an amount of such debt is legally enforceable and due to fraud; and

“(D) satisfies such other conditions as the Secretary may prescribe to ensure that the determination made under subparagraph (C) is valid and that the State has made reasonable efforts to obtain payment of such covered unemployment compensation debt.

“(5) COVERED UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION DEBT.—For purposes of this subsection, the term ‘covered unemployment compensation debt’ means—

“(A) a past-due debt for erroneous payment of unemployment compensation due to fraud which has become final under the law of a State certified by the Secretary of Labor pursuant to section 3304 and which remains uncollected for not more than 10 years;

“(B) contributions due to the unemployment fund of a State for which the State has determined the person to be liable due to fraud and which remain uncollected for not more than 10 years; and

“(C) any penalties and interest assessed on such debt.

“(6) REGULATIONS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may issue regulations prescribing the time and manner in which States must submit notices of covered unemployment compensation debt and the necessary information that must be contained in or accompany such notices. The regulations may specify the minimum amount of debt to which the reduction procedure established by paragraph (1) may be applied.

“(B) FEE PAYABLE TO SECRETARY.—The regulations may require States to pay a fee to the Secretary, which may be deducted from amounts collected, to reimburse the Secretary for the cost

of applying such procedure. Any fee paid to the Secretary pursuant to the preceding sentence shall be used to reimburse appropriations which bore all or part of the cost of applying such procedure.

“(C) SUBMISSION OF NOTICES THROUGH SECRETARY OF LABOR.—The regulations may include a requirement that States submit notices of covered unemployment compensation debt to the Secretary via the Secretary of Labor in accordance with procedures established by the Secretary of Labor. Such procedures may require States to pay a fee to the Secretary of Labor to reimburse the Secretary of Labor for the costs of applying this subsection. Any such fee shall be established in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury. Any fee paid to the Secretary of Labor may be deducted from amounts collected and shall be used to reimburse the appropriation account which bore all or part of the cost of applying this subsection.

“(7) ERRONEOUS PAYMENT TO STATE.—Any State receiving notice from the Secretary that an erroneous payment has been made to such State under paragraph (1) shall pay promptly to the Secretary, in accordance with such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe, an amount equal to the amount of such erroneous payment (without regard to whether any other amounts payable to such State under such paragraph have been paid to such State).

“(8) TERMINATION.—This section shall not apply to refunds payable after the date which is 10 years after the date of the enactment of this subsection.”

(b) DISCLOSURE OF CERTAIN INFORMATION TO STATES REQUESTING REFUND OFFSETS FOR LEGALLY ENFORCEABLE STATE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION DEBT RESULTING FROM FRAUD.—

(1) GENERAL RULE.—Paragraph (3) of section 6103(a) of such Code is amended by inserting “(10),” after “(6),”.

(2) DISCLOSURE TO DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND ITS AGENT.—Paragraph (10) of section 6103(l) of such Code is amended—

(A) by striking “(c), (d), or (e)” each place it appears in the heading and text and inserting “(c), (d), (e), or (f)”;

(B) in subparagraph (A) by inserting “, to officers and employees of the Department of Labor for purposes of facilitating the exchange of data in connection with a request made under subsection (f)(5) of section 6402,” after “section 6402”, and

(C) in subparagraph (B)—
(i) by inserting “(i)” after “(B)”; and
(ii) by adding at the end the following:

“(ii) Notwithstanding clause (i), return information disclosed to officers and employees of the Department of Labor may be accessed by agents who maintain and provide technological support to the Department of Labor’s Interstate Connection Network (ICON) solely for the purpose of providing such maintenance and support.”

(3) SAFEGUARDS.—Paragraph (4) of section 6103(p) of such Code is amended—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking “(l)(16),” and inserting “(l)(10), (16),”;

(B) in subparagraph (F)(i), by striking “(l)(16),” and inserting “(l)(10), (16),”;

(C) in the matter following subparagraph (F)(iii)—

(i) in each of the first two places it appears, by striking “(l)(16),” and inserting “(l)(10), (16),”;

(ii) by inserting “(10),” after “paragraph (6)(A),”;

(iii) in each of the last two places it appears, by striking “(l)(16)” and inserting “(l)(10) or (16)”.

(c) EXPENDITURES FROM STATE FUND.—Section 3304(a)(4) of such Code is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (E), by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(2) in subparagraph (F), by inserting “and” after the semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(G) with respect to amounts of covered unemployment compensation debt (as defined in section 6402(f)(4)) collected under section 6402(f)—

“(i) amounts may be deducted to pay any fees authorized under such section; and

“(ii) the penalties and interest described in section 6402(f)(4)(B) may be transferred to the appropriate State fund into which the State would have deposited such amounts had the person owing the debt paid such amounts directly to the State;”.

(d) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Subsection (a) of section 6402 of such Code is amended by striking “(c), (d), and (e),” and inserting “(c), (d), (e), and (f)”.

(2) Paragraph (2) of section 6402(d) of such Code is amended by striking “and before such overpayment is reduced pursuant to subsection (e)” and inserting “and before such overpayment is reduced pursuant to subsections (e) and (f)”.

(3) Paragraph (3) of section 6402(e) of such Code is amended in the last sentence by inserting “or subsection (f)” after “paragraph (1)”.

(4) Subsection (g) of section 6402 of such Code, as redesignated by subsection (a), is amended by striking “(c), (d), or (e)” and inserting “(c), (d), (e), or (f)”.

(5) Subsection (i) of section 6402 of such Code, as redesignated by subsection (a), is amended by striking “subsection (c) or (e)” and inserting “subsection (c), (e), or (f)”.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to refunds payable under section 6402 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

Amend the title so as to read: “An Act to amend section 402 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 to provide, in fiscal years 2009 through 2011, extensions of supplemental security income for refugees, asylees, and certain other humanitarian immigrants, and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to collect unemployment compensation debts resulting from fraud.”

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

Mr. McDERMOTT. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I think the torch of the Statue of Liberty might just be burning a little brighter today because we are soon going to send to the President a bill that helps the most vulnerable on our shores, refugees coming to America fleeing persecution, injustice,

torture and even the threat of death. They are Jews from the former Soviet Union, Kurds from Iraq, Hmong fighters from Vietnam and other oppressed peoples from around the globe.

Refugees often flee their home countries with little more than their clothes on their backs. When they are disabled or elderly, employment can be difficult, which means they face almost complete destitution without assistance. Our Nation's program that is designed to help low-income elderly and disabled individuals, the Supplemental Security Income program, or SSI, now terminates assistance to these refugees after they have been in the United States for 7 years. This cutoff was designed with the expectation that refugees would become citizens within this time frame and would then be eligible for continued benefits. However, a series of obstacles make that transition to citizenship difficult within the 7-year limit of SSI benefits. First, a refugee must live in the United States for at least 5 years before they are even eligible to submit an application for citizenship. A refugee must then confront a lengthy application process which takes up to 3 to 4 years. Backlogs in processing citizenship applications have been caused by a variety of issues, including protracted background checks put in place after the September 11 terrorist attacks.

There are other barriers to citizenship, such as the continuing impact of a recent annual cap on the number of asylees who may become legal permanent residents, a status which asylees must maintain for 4 years before they submit an application for citizenship.

□ 1215

Also, many disabled and elderly refugees encounter difficulties navigating the application process, which includes both an English language test and a U.S. civics test.

We passed bipartisan legislation a year ago in the House to extend SSI benefits for refugees and other humanitarian immigrants. The legislation before us today is that same bill sent back to us with an amendment by the Senate. The most significant modification by the Senate was to require all refugees to sign an affidavit that they are making a good faith effort to become U.S. citizens.

This bill, H.R. 2608, would generally extend SSI benefits for an additional 2 years for disabled and elderly refugees, asylees and other qualified humanitarian immigrants, including those whose benefits have expired in the past. Benefits could be extended for an additional time for those awaiting a decision on the pending application for citizenship. These policies would be in effect through 2011 and would restore SSI benefits for roughly 20,000 refugees.

The legislation completely offsets the cost of this SSI extension for refu-

gees with a provision that would reduce Federal tax refunds to recover fraudulent unemployment insurance payments. This Federal tax revenue offset authority already exists to collect unpaid child support, unpaid State taxes and debts owed to Federal agencies.

Before pursuing a tax offset, a State would be required to notify the individual and provide them with at least 60 days to contest the amount being recovered. By catching and reducing fraud in the unemployment insurance system, this provision not only offsets the cost of SSI extension for refugees, but it also would reduce unemployment taxes on employers. The Joint Committee on Taxation estimates the legislation will cut payroll taxes by \$315 million over the next 10 years.

Madam Speaker, refugees come to this country fleeing persecution. They reside in our country legally, and those eligible for SSI are disabled, elderly or both. This legislation extends a modest benefit to help them provide for their most basic essentials. The bill will not add one dime to the Federal deficit, and it will even provide a tax cut. This combination has generated very broad support for the measure, which passed the House unanimously last year and did likewise in the Senate last month. Additionally, the Bush administration has proposed the same policies in the President's budget.

I would like to expressly thank my colleague, Mr. WELLER, the ranking member, for working with me to forge this bipartisan bill. Today's action is the last step needed to provide a helping hand to those who need it most.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, in July of 2007, H.R. 2608, bipartisan legislation, the SSI Extension for Elderly and Disabled Refugees Act, passed the House by unanimous voice vote. In early August, just over a month ago, the Senate finally passed an amended version of the bill by unanimous consent, and we are here today acting to accept the amended bill.

This bipartisan legislation increases the amount of time certain low income, disabled and aged immigrants can receive Supplemental Security Income benefits. Currently these individuals are eligible for these benefits during their first 7 years in the United States. This legislation would extend that period to 9 years, or even longer if the individual has a pending application for citizenship.

These individuals arrived and remain in the United States legally and also arrived for humanitarian reasons. They have fled persecution and suffering in their own countries, and include refugees, asylees, Cuban-Haitian entrants, Hmong tribesmen who fought on the

side of the United States, victims of communist dictatorships and victims of trafficking from around the world. This legislation provides them additional eligibility to ensure that a lengthy citizenship application process does not inadvertently cause an elderly or disabled refugee to lose access to SSI benefits.

Because this expanded eligibility for low income, disabled and aged immigrants will be extended only through fiscal year 2011, a future Congress will need to review whether these provisions are working as intended and need to be extended. That future Congress can and should question whether refugees and others, who are playing by the rules and who apply for citizenship, have adequate and sufficient time to go through that process without losing access to SSI benefits.

To cover the cost of these additional benefits, the bill would reduce Federal income tax refunds to better recover unemployment benefit overpayments resulting from fraud. Tax refund offsets already occur for delinquent child support payments and certain other debts owed to the Federal Government. This change simply allows the current process to work in recovering certain unemployment benefit overpayments.

In addition to improving program integrity, this change will more than pay for the added SSI benefits provided by the bill, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

The Ways and Means Committee, and in particular the Income Security and Family Support Subcommittee on which I serve as ranking member, has long been active in developing legislation to combat fraud and abuse in unemployment and other benefits. I am pleased to see us continuing that effort with this legislation.

For example, in 2004, under the leadership of former Chairman WALLY HERGER, we passed a law to stop the illegal manipulation of State unemployment taxes. We also allowed State unemployment benefit programs to use current data on new hires to help prevent benefit overpayments.

This legislation builds on those efforts, and I am proud to support it. Even if it is not needed as a pay-for, this good government provision merits passage on its own.

This legislation is supported by a wide range of faith-based and other community groups, such as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, Lutheran Social Services and Catholic Charities.

I would also like to recognize the efforts of my Ways and Means colleague, Representative PHIL ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, who has worked diligently to extend SSI benefits to this vulnerable immigrant group, including by introducing legislation to do so.

I urge all Members to join me in supporting this legislation today.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to yield 1 minute to the distinguished Republican leader of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER).

Mr. BOEHNER. Let me thank my colleague for yielding, and I rise to support the bill that we are working on to extend SSI benefits to really a vulnerable group.

But I also rise to express my disappointment in the opportunity that we had last night to pass a bipartisan energy bill that would in fact do all of the above. I am concerned that the bill that did pass last night will do none of the above in terms of moving us toward more energy security.

Frankly, I don't think that the bill that passed last night has any chance of moving in the United States Senate. I do believe if we were to pass the bipartisan Abercrombie-Peterson bill, that it was very likely the Senate could take the bill up and move it quickly, a bill that would create a million new jobs, that would lower gas prices and lower energy prices. But that didn't happen.

But I rise today to say we are not going away. There is an awful lot of talk moving around here that later on this week we may have to take up a stimulus bill, a lot of well-intentioned, well-meaning money, taxpayer money that we would be sending around the country.

I can't think of any better stimulus bill than to pass a bipartisan energy bill that would in fact create 1 million new jobs, would in fact lower gas prices, lower energy prices, help our manufacturers all around the country, and a bill that the American people desperately want.

While gas prices came down temporarily, we saw them shoot up in the midst of the hurricane because there is no additional supply. There is no relief valve, and if anybody sneezes around the world in the energy market, what happens? Our gas prices go up. And while oil prices were coming down in the short-term, we all know how vulnerable we are. So taking a real honest step toward preserving America's energy security I think is critically necessary.

If we really want to help the American people, help create jobs in our country, why not pass a bipartisan bill that will in fact do that.

Mr. McDERMOTT. I continue to reserve my time.

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I include for the RECORD a letter signed by a large number of organizations throughout the country in support of the legislation that we have before the House today.

JUNE 28, 2007.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE, Representing a diverse cross-section of organizations from

across the country, we write to you today to ask that you support H.R.2608—the “SSI Extension for Elderly and Disabled Refugees Act.” This bipartisan bill is a critical lifeline to thousands of elderly and disabled refugees who are about to lose, or have already lost, their Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits due to the arbitrary seven-year time limit to which their eligibility is limited.

This bill, introduced by Representatives Jim McDermott (D-7th WA) and Jerry Weller (R-11th IL), Chair and Ranking Member, respectively, of the Ways & Means Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support, will provide a two-year extension of SSI eligibility for elderly and disabled refugees, as well as a provision to cover those who lost benefits prior to enactment of the legislation. The bill will also ensure that refugees who are making efforts to become citizens, but are caught up in the processing backlogs through no fault of their own, are given additional time to naturalize. H.R.2608 will provide vital relief to thousands of refugees who have already fallen into extreme destitution.

The number of people who are losing their life-sustaining SSI benefits, in large part due to delays in the immigration system beyond their control, is climbing. The Social Security Administration currently projects that 50,000 elderly and disabled refugees will face extreme hardship and destitution by 2012 due to the suspension of their SSI benefits. These individuals fled persecution or torture in countries such as Iran, Russia, Iraq, Vietnam and Somalia, and now are too elderly or disabled to support themselves.

As more and more people begin to reach the end of their seven-year eligibility period, the human impact of this restrictive time limit has become increasingly dire and all the more intolerable. Some will lose health insurance as well, because SSI and Medicaid eligibility are typically linked. Among those who have already lost SSI benefits is a Jewish elderly couple from the former Soviet Union; the husband is deaf and the wife suffers from heart disease. However, this restriction does not affect only the elderly, as illustrated by the case of a 16 year-old Iranian boy with mental retardation, autism, seizures, and severe macrocephaly who lost his SSI benefits and Medicaid health insurance due to the seven-year time limit. These are only but two of the thousands of heart-breaking stories that we will continue to be confronted with unless Congress acts now to lengthen the insufficient eligibility period for this extremely vulnerable population.

The crisis is already upon us. Each and every month, elderly and disabled refugees are losing their lifeline of support. With the exception of West Virginia, no state is left untouched by this arbitrary time limit. Some 4,500 people will lose their SSI benefits in fiscal year 2007 alone. This bill enjoys bipartisan support, builds on similar proposals in recent Bush Administration budgets, and contains a savings provision that will cover the modest cost of the extension. Given the urgency of the situation and the life-threatening consequences that these individuals face, we strongly urge you to support the passage of H.R.2608 this year. We are hopeful that Congress will act quickly and decisively to prevent the unnecessary hardship that this already-victimized population stands to suffer. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

NATIONAL

American Academy of HIV; American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging; American Association of Jews from

the Former USSR, Inc; American Association of People with Disabilities; American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; American Friends Service Committee; American Jewish Committee; American Network of Community Options and Resources; American Occupational Therapy Association; Americans for Democratic Action, Inc.; Asian American Justice Center; Asian Americans for Equality; Association of Jewish Family & Children's Agencies (AJFCA); Boat People SOS; Break the Chain Campaign; Campaign for Working Families; Catholic Charities USA; Center for Civil Justice; Disability Navigators Inc.

EESA-Eastern European Service Agency; Gay Men's Health Crisis; Hispanic Coalition; HIV Medicine Association; HIVictorious, Inc.; Hmong National Development, Inc.; Immigrant and Refugee Rights Program, Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs; Institute for Peace and Justice; Institute for Social and Economic Development (ISED); International AIDS Empowerment; International District Housing Alliance; International Rescue Committee; International Service Center; Jewish Council for Public Affairs; Jubilee Campaign USA Inc.; Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Office of the Wheaton Franciscans; Living Room, Inc.; Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS); Lutheran Services in America; 9 to 5, National Association of Working Women.

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd; National Asian Pacific Center on Aging; National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development; National Council of Jewish Women; National Council on Aging; National Immigration Forum; National Immigration Law Center; National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC); National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty; National Priorities Project; National Senior Citizens Law Center; National Women's Law Center; NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby; New Sudan Generation; Northwest Health Law Advocates; Northwest Immigrant Rights Project; Progressive Jewish Alliance; Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism; RESULTS.

Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law; Sisters of Mercy of the Americas; Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC); The AIDS Institute; The Arc of the United States; The Coalition on Human Needs; The Leadership Conference of Women Religious; The National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum; The Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children; The Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring; U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants; Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations; United Cerebral Palsy; United Jewish Communities; United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society; USAction; Wider Opportunities for Women; Women of Reform Judaism; Women of Reform Judaism; World Relief; YWCA USA.

LOCAL/STATE/REGIONAL

Alabama

Collat Jewish Family Services—Birmingham, Alabama.

Alaska

Alaska Center for Public Policy; Refugee Assistance & Immigration Services (RAIS)—Alaska;

Arizona

Area Agency on Aging, Region One-Phoenix, AZ; Arizona Advocacy Network; Jewish Family & Children's Service—Tucson, Arizona; Pima Council on Aging—Tucson, AZ;

Protecting Arizona's Family Coalition; United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona. *Arkansas*

Holy Angels Convent—Arkansas; St. Augustine Catholic Church, North Little Rock, AR; St. Augustine Center for Children, Inc., North Little Rock, AR.

California

9to5 Bay Area; 9to5 Los Angeles; ACLU of Southern California; Asian Law Alliance—San Jose, CA; Asian Law Caucus—Northern California; Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California; Bay Area Immigrant Rights Coalition (BAIRC)—Oakland, CA; Bet Tzedek Legal Services—Los Angeles County; California Church IMPACT; California Immigrant Policy Center; Catholic Charities of Los Angeles, Inc; Center for Gender and Refugee Studies—San Francisco, CA; City of Los Angeles Human Relations Commission—Los Angeles, CA; Disabled Student Union at Pacific School of Religion—Berkeley, CA; Ethiopian Community Services, Inc.—California; Fresno Stonewall Democrats—Fresno, CA; Gray Panthers California; HomeBase—San Francisco, CA; International Rescue Committee—San Diego Regional Resettlement Office; Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties; Jewish Family and Children's Services of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties; Jewish Family and Children's Services of the East Bay—Berkeley, California; Jewish Family Service of San Diego—California; Korean Resource Center, Los Angeles, CA; L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center—CA; Mental Health Advocacy Services, Inc.—Los Angeles; Palo Alto Association of Veterans of World War II, California; Progressive Jewish Alliance—California; Protection and Advocacy, Inc.—Sacramento, CA; Sacramento Mutual Housing Association, CA; San Diego Hunger Coalition—CA; San Francisco Bay Area Darfur Coalition—CA; Service Employees International Union Local 1021—Northern California; SIREN, Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network—San Jose, CA; St. Mary's Center—Oakland, CA; St. Paul's Episcopal Church—San Rafael, CA; The International Institute of the Bay Area—CA; The Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring—Southern California District; Western Center on Law and Poverty—Los Angeles & Sacramento, CA.

Colorado

9to5 Colorado; Coloradans For Immigrant Rights, a project of the American Friends Service Committee; Colorado Progressive Coalition; RESULTS of Aurora, Colorado; Rocky Mountain Survivors Center—Denver, CO.

Connecticut

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Norwich, Inc.—CT; Collaborative Center for Justice, Inc.—Hartford, CT; Connecticut Citizen Action Group; Connecticut Legal Services; International Institute of CT, Inc.—Bridgeport, CT; Jewish Family Services—Danbury, CT; People of Faith CT—West Hartford, CT; Regional Network of Programs Inc./Prospect House—Bridgeport, CT.

Florida

Catholic Charities Legal Services—Archdiocese of Miami, Inc.; Catholic Charities of Central Florida; Center for Independent Living of South Florida, Inc.—Miami-Dade County, Florida; Florida Alliance Pro-Legalization; Florida Consumer Action Network; Florida Fiscal Policy Project—Miami, Florida; Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center; Gulfcoast Legal Services, Inc.—FL; Hispanic

American Council, Florida Alliance Pro-Legalization; Jewish Family Service Inc. of Broward County—Plantation, Florida; Jewish Federation of South Palm Beach County—FL; Legal Aid Society of the Orange County Bar Association, Orlando, Florida; Refugee Immigration Project, Jacksonville (FL) Area Legal Aid; St. Johns County Legal Aid—St. Augustine, FL; The Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County, Inc; Youth Co-Op, Inc.—Florida.

Georgia

Atlanta 9to5; Georgia Rural Urban Summit—Decatur, GA; Good Shepherd Services of Atlanta; Gwinnett Ministries Network—Gwinnett County, Georgia; Refugee Family Services—Stone Mountain, Georgia; Women Watch Afrika, Inc, Decatur, GA.

Hawaii

Na Loio—Immigrant Rights and Public Interest Legal Center—Honolulu, Hawaii.

Idaho

Agency for New Americans—Boise, Idaho; Idaho Office for Refugees; United Vision for Idaho.

Illinois

Citizen Action/Illinois; Commission on Religion & Race—Naperville IL; Grace United Methodist Church—Naperville IL; Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights (Midwest region); Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society Chicago; Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights; Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago; Korean American Resource & Cultural Center, Chicago, IL; Project IRENE—Illinois; Protestants for the Common Good, Chicago, IL.

Indiana

CICOA Aging & In-Home Solutions, Indianapolis, IN.

Iowa

Iowa Citizen Action Network.

Kentucky

College Democrats of America—Morehead State University Chapter; Jewish Family & Vocational Service (Louisville, Kentucky); The Community Relations Council of the Jewish Community Federation of Louisville.

Louisiana

LA Harm Reduction Coalition—Louisiana.

Maine

Catholic Charities Maine Refugee & Immigration Services—Portland, ME; Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project, Portland, Maine; Legal Services for the Elderly—Scarborough, Maine; Maine Equal Justice Partners; Maine People's Alliance; Organization to Win Economic Rights—Portland, Maine; The Jewish Federation of Greater Portland; Waterville Area Bridges for Peace and Justice—Waterville and surrounding communities.

Maryland

Jewish Family Services—Baltimore, Maryland; Maryland Association of Jews from the Former USSR; Maryland Vietnamese Mutual Association; Progressive Maryland; Public Justice Center—Baltimore MD; The Senior Connection of Montgomery County—Silver Spring, MD.

Massachusetts

Community Legal Services And Counseling Center in Cambridge, MA; Disability Law Center, Inc.—Boston, MA; First Congregational Church of Reading—Reading, MA; International Rescue Committee Boston Office; JALSA—the Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action—Boston; Jewish Community Housing for the Elderly—Boston, MA; Jewish Community Relations Council of

Greater Boston; Medical-Legal Partnership for Children Boston Medical Center; Strongest Link AIDS Services—Essex County, MA; Massachusetts Association of Jewish Federations.

Michigan

ACCESS (Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services—Dearborn; Jewish Family Service—Detroit, Michigan; Jewish Family Services—Ann Arbor, Michigan; Michigan Citizen Action; Oakland County Welfare Rights Organization—Pontiac, MI; The IHM Justice, Peace and Sustainability Office, Michigan.

Minnesota

Jewish Community Action, St. Paul, MN; Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota; Mid-Minnesota Legal Assistance; National Council of Jewish Women—Minnetonka, MN; Vietnamese Social Services of Minnesota.

Missouri

Bi-Lingual International Assistant Services—St. Louis, MO; Catholic Charities Archdiocese of St. Louis; Jewish Vocational Service/Center for New Americans—Kansas City, MO; Missouri Association for Social Welfare; Missouri Budget Project—St. Louis, MO; Missouri Progressive Vote Coalition; Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and Associates—Missouri; St. Louis Jewish Community Relations Council—St. Louis, MO.

Montana

Montana People's Action.

New Hampshire

New Hampshire Citizens Alliance.

New Jersey

Community FoodBank of New Jersey; Congregation Brothers of Israel—Long Branch, New Jersey; International Institute of New Jersey; International Institute of New Jersey; Jewish Federation of Monmouth County—NJ; Lutheran Office of Governmental Ministry in New Jersey; Migration and Refugee Services of the Diocese of Trenton—Trenton, NJ; New Jersey Citizen Action; Temple Shalom—Aberdeen, NJ; The Human Concerns/Social Justice Committee of St. Anselm's Church—Wayside, NJ; The Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Southern New Jersey; The Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring, New Jersey Region; UJA Federation of Northern New Jersey.

New Mexico

Community Action New Mexico; Domestic Unity—New Mexico; Empowering Our Communities in New Mexico—Bernalillo, NM; New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty—Albuquerque, NM; New Mexico PACE; Open Hands—Sante Fe, NM; State of New Mexico's Human Services Department.

New York

Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture—New York, NY; Bukharian Jewish Center, New York; Cathedral Emergency Services—Syracuse, NY; Center for Independence of the Disabled—New York; Citizen Action of New York; Claire Heuresse Community Center, Inc—New York; Coalition of Behavioral Health Agencies, Inc—New York; Community Healthcare Network—New York City; Community HIV AIDS Mobilization Project—CHAMP, New York; Disabled in Action of Greater Syracuse, New York; Empire Justice Center, New York; Episcopal Migration Ministries—NYC; Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies—New York City; JBFCS, Manhattan North Community Counseling Center; Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services—New York, NY; Jewish

Community Council of the Rockaway Peninsula—Far Rockaway, NY; Jewish Family Services of NENY (Albany, New York); Legal Services for the Elderly, Disabled or Disadvantaged of Western New York, Inc.; Metro New York Health Care For All Campaign. Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty—NY; New York Association on Independent Living, Inc; New York City Department for the Aging; New York Disaster Interfaith Services; New York Immigration Coalition; Society of Jesus, New York Province—Albany, NY; Syracuse Habitat for Humanity, Inc.—NY; The Central Queens Y&YWH, Forest Hills, New York; The International Institute of Buffalo, NY; The Rockland Immigration Coalition—NY; UJA—Federation of New York; US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants Albany Field Office—NY; West Side Campaign Against Hunger—New York; YKASEC—Empowering the Korean American Community, Flushing, NY.

North Carolina

Episcopal Migration Ministries—eastern North Carolina; North Carolina Refugee Health Coordinator.

North Dakota

NDPeople.org—North Dakota.

Ohio

Catholic Charities Health and Human Services of the Diocese of Cleveland; Greater Dayton Vietnamese Association—Greater Dayton, Ohio area; Jewish Family Service Association of Cleveland; Jewish Family Service of Toledo, Inc.—Toledo, Ohio; Jewish Family Services—Columbus, Ohio; Jewish Family Services—Youngstown, Ohio; Jewish Federation of Greater Dayton Jewish Community Relations Council—Dayton, Ohio; Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry—Cleveland, Ohio; Ohio Jewish Communities Refugee & Immigration Services—Columbus, OH.

Oklahoma

YWCA Multicultural Center—Tulsa, OK.

Oregon

Asian Pacific American Community Support and Service Association (APACSA)—Portland, OR; Community Action Directors of Oregon (CADO); Disability Navigators Inc—Oregon; Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization (IRCO)—Portland, Oregon; Interfaith Action for Justice—Bend, Oregon; Klamath Lake Community Action Services—Klamath Falls, OR; Oregon Action; Peaceful Place—Oregon; The Advocacy Coalition for Seniors and People with Disabilities—OR; The Human Services Coalition of Oregon.

Pennsylvania

HIAS and Council Migration Service of Philadelphia; JCCs of Greater Philadelphia (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania); JEVS Human Services—Philadelphia; JEVS Social Services (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania); Jewish Family and Children's Services (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania); Jewish Family Service of Greater Wilkes-Barre (Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania); Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania); Maternity Care Coalition—Philadelphia, PA; Mount St Joseph—St Elizabeth, PA; National Council of Jewish Women—PA; New World Association—Philadelphia, PA; Pennsylvania Refugee Resettlement Program; St. Johns Lutheran Church—Lewistown, PA; YWCA Philadelphia.

Rhode Island

National Association of Social Workers—Rhode Island Chapter; Rhode Island Ocean State Action.

South Carolina

Columbia Jewish Federation/Jewish Family Service—Columbia, SC; Jewish Family Service (Columbia, South Carolina).

South Dakota

Systematic Theology and Christian Heritage—Sioux Falls, SD.

Tennessee

Jewish Family Service of Nashville and Middle Tennessee; Tennessee Citizen Action.

Texas

Catholic Charities Diocese of Ft. Worth, Inc.; Jewish Family and Children's Service (San Antonio, Texas); Jewish Family Service (Houston, Texas); Refugio Del Rio Grande, Inc.—San Benito, TX; South Texas Food Bank; Texas Conference United Methodist Church Board of Church & Society.

Utah

Jewish Family Service of Salt Lake; Learning Loft—Salt Lake Valley, Utah; Utah Community Action Partnership Association; Utah Housing Coalition.

Vermont

Central Vermont Community Action Council; Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program; VT Affordable Housing Coalition.

Virginia

Bay Aging—Urbanna, VA; Center for Multicultural Services—Falls Church, VA; Disabled Action Committee—Virginia; Potomac Legal Aid Society—Virginia; Rappahannock Area Agency on Aging, Inc.—Fredericksburg, VA; Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School for Christian Education—Richmond, VA.

Washington

Asian Counseling & Referral Service—Seattle, WA; Catholic Community Services of Western Washington; Jewish Family Service of Seattle (Seattle, Washington); Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle (Seattle, Washington); Solid Ground—Seattle, WA; South Sound Outreach Services—Tacoma, Washington; Washington Community Action Network; Washington Senior Citizens' Lobby—Olympia, WA.

Washington DC

Whitman-Walker Clinic—Washington, DC.

West Virginia

West Virginia Citizen Action Group.

Wisconsin

9to5 Poverty Network Initiative (Wisconsin); Citizen Action of Wisconsin; Milwaukee Association of Russian-speaking Jews; Milwaukee Jewish Council for Community Relations; UMOS, Inc.—Milwaukee, WI; Wisconsin Jewish Conference.

I yield 3 minutes to my friend, the distinguished gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS).

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I too join with our leader and all in the Chamber in support of this legislation. I actually have great respect for the ranking member here. We have had our fights, but I know he is a man of sincerity.

We are on the floor just to highlight the other challenges faced by those people who we are trying to help. SSI payments do not go far enough when we are under a regime of high energy prices, and, as I talked about in the last bill from this article here, gas prices confine sick people.

Again, as a former high school teacher on how a bill becomes a law, we

should not be dancing in the well of the floor on the passage of a bill, nor should we be disappointed, those of us, with the outcome. The process still goes forward. Hopefully there will be a conference.

Hopefully there will be changes and we bring more supply to this energy debate. Because if we don't bring on more supply, and in my aspect coal-to-liquid technologies, the tar sands from Canada, we get a real bill that addresses where the oil is off the California coast, which is 50 miles less, not 50 miles out, and then we take those royalties to move into renewables, clean solar, wind, all of the above, we are going to have to continue to revisit all these spending regimes on social services based upon high energy costs.

So we come down here respectfully with the matter of the bill. It is needed. It is supported. We are all going to vote yes. But also to highlight the fact that there is much more to be done on the energy debate. And I am not one that says we are going to drive prices down to \$1.50 a gallon. I never make those proclamations. What I would like to see is stabilization, instead of the swings that we will see.

I would also like to see us not be held captive to Mother Nature by having all our main assets in hurricane alley versus disbursed around the country, and in my case the coal-to-liquid refinery aspects, which would be very, very helpful.

This article says, "Gas prices confine sick people. Some have to cut back on traveling, treatment such as dialysis, or chemotherapy." If that is what not having an energy plan that can be signed into law is doing to our most needful, then we have not done the right thing.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. I continue to reserve my time.

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY).

Mr. GINGREY. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois for yielding, and I do rise in support of H.R. 2608. But I wanted to take the opportunity, Madam Speaker, to talk about energy.

Obviously this is the main issue I think on the minds of most Americans today, and it has led, these high energy prices and dependency on foreign oil that we have been burdened by for 10 these many years, since back when we knew this back in the seventies when we had a similar crisis and failed to do anything about it, and it has caused this economy, it is almost like a domino effect in my opinion, Madam Speaker, when you look at the high price of everything, the unemployment rate going up, what has happened on Wall Street, the meltdown in the subprime market.

So we felt and I think most of my colleagues would agree on both sides of

the aisle that the energy crisis is our number one concern as we move into the fall elections and congressional elections. Obviously this is a Presidential year.

□ 1230

So my disappointment yesterday, when Speaker PELOSI, returning from the August recess, we, as you know, many on the Republican side, we invited our Democratic colleagues to join us, came back to Washington on a number of days. I think a total of 134 participated, some of us several times.

We had lots of folks down here sitting in the seats because a Member could bring people on the floor, even though the C-SPAN cameras were off, microphones were off, the lights were dim, and we had some in the gallery as well, and talked about this issue. We just couldn't wait for the rest of our colleagues to get back so we could do something.

This motion to recommit with instructions last night, the Abercrombie-Peterson bill, I think, had 39 Democratic cosponsors, many, many, Republicans, and I think it was a very, very good piece of legislation that did not include ANWR. It carved out ANWR, realizing that was something we agreed to disagree on, and leave that out of the legislation.

But the most important part of the Peterson-Abercrombie bill that differed from what the majority party, as you know, brought to us for a final vote that did pass, it has no incentive whatsoever for the States to allow drilling off of their shores for the billions of gallons of petroleum and millions of cubic feet of natural gas, because they are sitting there thinking, well, gosh, on the gulf coast, Alabama, Texas and Louisiana are getting those royalties and putting them to good use, and we need that.

My State of Georgia, right now, we have 135 miles of shoreline, the great State of Georgia, and we are \$1.5 billion short in this revenue year, this fiscal year. I am sure Georgia would be one of the very first to get in line if we had that included. I am disappointed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman from Georgia has expired.

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I am happy to yield the gentleman 1 additional minute.

Mr. GINGREY. I don't know what is going to happen in the Senate today or tomorrow, but hopefully we can get a bill passed through the Senate that has more, more in it than the draft language that wasn't actually in bill form that came out in the Senate 5 or 6 weeks ago with a group of 10, now up to a group of 20.

It's still not too late for this Congress, House and Senate, to do something for the American people. I urge us to do that in a bipartisan way.

Look, let's do the right thing, and I think the election outcomes will take care of themselves. The good people that need to be here will come back, and the ones that don't, won't. Let's just do the right thing for the American people.

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, we have no additional speakers, so I would be happy to briefly close.

H.R. 2608 is bipartisan legislation. It's legislation designed to help those who need help. As my chairman noted, those who, frankly, benefit from this legislation have been victims of tyranny. Those who fought on the wrong side and, in many cases, they fought on the side of the United States and were forced to flee their country, they're elderly, they're disabled, and, frankly, they're people that came here legally.

So I want to ask my colleagues to do exactly what we did when we voted on this legislation before, to vote with strong, unanimous, bipartisan support of this important legislation.

I also want to thank my chairman for working in a bipartisan way to move this important legislation to the floor, to work with our colleagues in the Senate and the past legislation, which will become law with this vote today.

Madam Speaker, I urge bipartisan support for this legislation. I thank my chairman for the opportunity to work with him on this important legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This bill allows Members to accomplish three objectives with a single vote, help needy refugees, cut taxes and reduce the Federal deficit. That's a trifecta that should draw support from every Member of the House.

But I want to conclude, really, with a story about one of the witnesses who came before our subcommittee. His name was K'Keng, and he fought alongside American forces during the Vietnam War. In fact, he was recruited and trained by our own special forces.

After the U.S. pulled out of Vietnam, he was imprisoned for 6 years as a political prisoner, after which he ultimately made his transfer to the United States as a refugee. He tried working, but the wounds he had suffered during the war made that difficult.

Based on his disability, and the fact that he had almost no source of income, he began receiving supplemental security income, or SSI benefits. For those benefits, he had those benefits, but they were terminated when he reached the 7-year limit on SSI for refugees.

There are thousands of other refugees who have taken different paths to get here, but their basic story is the same. They fled persecution, they now reside legally in the United States, they are

disabled or elderly, and they need our help.

This bill will provide them just the assistance, without raising the Federal deficit by a single dime. In fact, the anti-fraud provisions in this bill reduce the debt by nearly \$100 million and cut taxes by over \$300 million.

I urge all Members to support this bipartisan legislation, to help the needy, cut taxes and reduce our debt.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill, H.R. 2608.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendments were concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FOSTERING CONNECTIONS TO SUCCESS AND INCREASING ADOPTIONS ACT OF 2008

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6893) to amend parts B and E of title IV of the Social Security Act to connect and support relative caregivers, improve outcomes for children in foster care, provide for tribal foster care and adoption access, improve incentives for adoption, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6893

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008".

SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title.

Sec. 2. Table of contents.

TITLE I—CONNECTING AND SUPPORTING RELATIVE CAREGIVERS

Sec. 101. Kinship guardianship assistance payments for children.

Sec. 102. Family connection grants.

Sec. 103. Notification of relatives.

Sec. 104. Licensing standards for relatives.

Sec. 105. Authority for comparisons and disclosures of information in the Federal Parent Locator Service for child welfare, foster care, and adoption assistance program purposes.

TITLE II—IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Sec. 201. State option for children in foster care, and certain children in an adoptive or guardianship placement, after attaining age 18.

Sec. 202. Transition plan for children aging out of foster care.

Sec. 203. Short-term training for child welfare agencies, relative guardians, and court personnel.