

I wholeheartedly support this resolution honoring the accomplishments of an outstanding and inspiring public servant, colleague, trailblazer, and friend, Congressman Norman Mineta.

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support H. Res. 1377 to honor the accomplishments of Norman Yoshio Mineta, a pioneering public servant whom I am privileged to call my friend.

I thank my colleagues, Congressman MIKE HONDA and Congresswoman JUDY CHU, for introducing this important resolution.

Norm Mineta has served this country and the Asian American and Pacific Islander community with great distinction and unparalleled humility. The many "firsts" he has to his name—the first Asian American mayor of a major U.S. city, the first chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, and the first Asian American member of a presidential Cabinet—dot a remarkable career that has been dedicated to bettering lives through efficient transportation, expanding civil rights for all, and strengthening Asian American and Pacific Islander participation in public life.

I thank my dear friend Norm Mineta for his tremendous and longstanding leadership, and I look forward to continuing to work with him on behalf of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to address the House for one minute.

I rise in strong support of H. Res. 1377, a resolution honoring the accomplishments of Norman Yoshio Mineta.

There are not too many public servants that are requested to serve as a cabinet member by a President of a different political party.

Norman Yoshio Mineta's good nature, astute knowledge and seamless ability to be a first-rate mediator gave rise to his selection to serve our country regardless of the political party at the helm.

He was the U.S. Secretary of Transportation for President George W. Bush and U.S. Secretary of Commerce for President Clinton.

Despite being forced to leave his home and relocate to the Hear Mountain internment camp during World War II (a sad example of civil rights injustice), Secretary Mineta's love of country never faltered.

He fought for our freedom in the U.S. Army, and later was elected mayor of San Jose, California.

He continued his public service as U.S. Representative to the 15th district of California where he founded and chaired the bicameral and bipartisan Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC).

Secretary Mineta dedicated his life to our country and we are a better Nation because of his work and legacy.

Secretary Mineta is the fitting recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award in the United States, in 2006, and the Grand Cordon, Order of the Rising Sun from the Japanese Government, which was the highest honor bestowed upon an individual of Japanese descent outside of Japan.

Secretary Mineta, we thank you for your service to our Nation.

I urge my colleagues to support H. Res. 1377 in recognition of his lifetime of service to our Nation.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1377.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

DEFICIT REDUCTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I have been troubled by what seems to me a mistaken focus in the debate about reducing the deficit. I do agree that it is important to reduce the deficit. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I now believe that I am more focused on reducing the deficit than many of my colleagues, including on the other side of the aisle, who have with great alacrity put deficit reduction aside in favor of a fairly indiscriminate degree of tax reductions.

A couple of weeks ago, we were told that reducing the deficit was the number one priority, but reducing the taxes, particularly on the wealthiest in America, rapidly overtook deficit reduction. I hope we will get back to it. What troubles me is the extent to which people, mainly on the Republican side, but elsewhere as well, have said that what we need to do most to get the deficit down, as we should, is to reduce entitlements. That's a polite way of saying they want to cut Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid, even though Medicaid is not an entitlement. But those are the things that are on the agenda.

In fact, that is neither socially or economically the sensible way to begin with the short-term—near-term deficit reduction we need. We shouldn't say short-term. We do, I believe, need some stimulus. I'm glad we are extending unemployment compensation. I wish we were doing more to help cities and States keep people on the payroll. The private sector has added jobs in these

past few months. Job growth has been held down because the public sector has been forced at the State and local level to fire people. But this focus on Medicare and Social Security is mistaken economically and politically.

Mr. Speaker, let me calculate; about 45 years ago, I took an economics course in graduate school from a young assistant professor named Henry Aaron. I was impressed with him then, and I've been impressed with him since. In the New York Times recently he had an article in the op ed page headlined: "All or Nothing Equals Nothing," in which he argued that the focus on reducing the deficit by 2020, which is the time we've set ourselves, which is very important, is an issue that should not encompass a focus on Social Security and Medicare.

He is not saying ignore Social Security and Medicare, only that a rational way to go after the deficit in the near term wouldn't focus on them. And Social Security, as he points out, Social Security is not going to be contributing to the deficit at that point. Indeed, Social Security at this point is in such good economic shape that people have decided Social Security should be a contributor to economic stimulus because we are reducing the revenue that comes into Social Security for 2 years by reducing the payroll tax.

Now I think that's a useful stimulus, but I regret the fact that it was not accompanied by a binding piece of legislation that will return that money from elsewhere in the general fund so that we don't put Social Security further in the hole. But as Henry Aaron points out, yes, we should begin to look at Social Security and the problems of 30 years from now. My own view is that you do that mostly by increasing the level of income on which the tax is levied, but there is no need to begin doing that right away.

I should have said this earlier, Mr. Speaker. Two of the greatest accomplishments of America in the 20th century, Social Security and Medicare, accomplished an important goal. They made it the case that poverty was no longer going to be the rule for many older people. Prior to Social Security and then Medicare, poverty was too often the reward for living long enough if you weren't rich. We have brought older people on the whole—not entirely—out of poverty. There are still enough low-income older people that I greatly regretted the fact that this House and the Senate, which are apparently ready to give multimillionaires tax breaks, couldn't support \$250 per person for Social Security recipients, some of whom were wealthy but many of whom are quite poor. And I have people saying, Well, you don't want to give Warren Buffett \$250. Mr. Buffett, to his credit, has objected to a \$250,000 grant that he is being offered—more than that—in the tax reduction that is