

acquire their property. The complaint is filed with the district court of the district where the land is located and the appropriate compensation is ascertained. Once this process is completed, the federal government is afforded the option of paying this amount and assuming the title of the land or moving for dismissal, in which case, the title of the property remains with the original owner. It is important to remember that during this process, the landowner's opportunity to conduct any type of development is severely limited, depriving these individuals of time, revenue and, in some cases, overall value in their land.

The second alternative is termed a "quick-take" procedure where the title of the property is immediately transferred to the federal government and an amount, which the government presumes the land is worth, is provided to the owner. Normal protocol is then followed, a condemnation complaint is filed and the court determines just compensation. If this amount is more than that originally provided, the federal government is required to pay the difference with interest.

The Prompt Compensation Act of 1998 will require the federal government to provide just compensation to the property owner within 90 days or forfeit its interest. In other words, this legislation will simply make the "quick-take" procedure the only option available to the federal government. The Prompt Compensation Act of 1998 will require the federal government to strongly consider all viable alternatives before attempting to acquire new land and prevent landowners from losing valuable time in developing their property. I urge all my colleagues to become a cosponsor of this bill and to strongly consider the significant impact this legislation will have in curbing the taking authority of the federal government, while at the same time, strengthening the private property rights of America's landowners.

IN PRAISE OF INGHAM COUNTY'S  
EFFORTS TO REDUCE TEEN  
SMOKING

**HON. DEBBIE STABENOW**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 15, 1998*

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the outstanding work of the Ingham County Board of Commissioners and the Ingham County Health Department in restricting the sale of tobacco to minors. The Ingham County Board of Commissioners passed an ordinance effective January 1, 1993 requiring that tobacco could only be sold through establishments licensed by the county. For violations, the Health Department can issue citations and for repeated violations have the license to sell tobacco revoked.

These enforcement provisions are similar to many used for enforcing liquor laws in communities which have been very effective in curbing the sale of liquor to minors. The possibility of losing a license to sell liquor or tobacco for a violation of law has proven to have a significant impact on the business community's self monitoring activities.

In 1992, 78% of minors who attempted to purchase cigarettes in Ingham County were successfully able to make a purchase. In other words, only 22% of all minors were refused

the sale. Since the ordinance was instituted in the county in 1993, that number has declined dramatically. In a recent investigation conducted in Ingham county, 85% of all minors who attempted to purchase cigarettes were denied the sale. These are impressive statistics that I would like to see repeated across the nation.

The war against teen smoking will only be successful if it is fought on many fronts. Tough, comprehensive laws must be passed at the federal level. And, we must work in partnership with states and local governments if we are to be successful. I encourage state and local governments across our country to join the fight and follow the example set by Ingham County by instituting laws in their communities that prevent minors from purchasing cigarettes. I commend the efforts of the Ingham County Board of Commissioners and the Ingham County Health Department for making a bold effort to improve the health and welfare of our community's youngest citizens.

BALINT VAZSONYI: TRUE  
AMERICAN

**HON. GEORGE P. RADANOVICH**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 15, 1998*

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend Dr. Balint Vazsonyi as a true American. Balint Vazsonyi knows first-hand what it means to live in fear, as he has done so under Nazi occupation then under Communist oppression in his native Hungary.

Overcoming the barriers to human expression put up by authoritarian states, Dr. Vazsonyi has since become a world-renowned concert pianist, and a well-respected historian and ultimately a United States citizen.

Dr. Vazsonyi, or just plain "Balint", is a regular op-ed contributor to the Washington Times as well as several other newspapers around the country. He sits on the boards of many community groups and is the Director of the Center for the American Founding. As a child he lived under Nazi terror and as an adolescent he participated in the Hungarian uprising against the Soviet occupiers.

Balint's musical career is well known. He received his Artist Diploma at Budapest's famed Liszt Academy. Just recently, the Hungarian Embassy in Washington, DC presented him a gala piano recital in celebration of the 50th anniversary of his first concert appearance in Hungary. Balint also has a Ph.D. in history.

I highly recommend to my colleagues, and all Americans, his new book, "America's 30 Years War: Who is Winning?" Drawing on his own life experiences he describes how our hard-won freedoms are gradually being eroded. Vazsonyi traces the essence of what makes America unique, from the Founding until today, and exposes how ideas imported from European socialist states are undermining America's distinct political and moral culture.

In a witty and personal style, Balint documents how the founding principles of the rule of law, individual rights, secure ownership of property and common American identity are being deliberately supplanted by the alien notions of group rights, forced redistribution of private possessions, and multiculturalism.

In "America's 30 Years War: Who is Winning?" Dr. Vazsonyi shows, with unmistakably clarity, how every time we move away from America's founding principles we move toward the failed model of European socialism.

Please take time to read this seminal and through-provoking book.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Dr. Balint Vazsonyi on his many accomplishments and I ask my colleagues to join me in wishing him many more years of success.

SOCIAL SECURITY

**HON. LEE H. HAMILTON**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 15, 1998*

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert my Washington Report for Wednesday, July 8, 1998 into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM

In recent months, much attention has been focused in Congress on the status of the Social Security program. Following President Clinton's State of the Union address this past January in which he recommended that saving Social Security be a top priority, reform proposals have become a hot topic. The most widely discussed proposals include investing some of the Social Security Trust Fund in the stock market, adding a meanstest requirement, or enacting a combination of tax cuts and benefit reductions.

SUCCESS OF SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Security is not only a very popular program but has also proven to be an extremely successful program in providing a safety net for our nation's elderly.

Since the program began under President Franklin Roosevelt in 1935, Social Security has provided benefits to generations of workers and their families, with the number of beneficiaries over the last half century in excess of 160 million Americans. With almost 92% of Americans over the age of 65 receiving Social Security benefits, this program provides nearly universal coverage. In Indiana, over 960,000 Hoosiers are beneficiaries, covering over 17% of our state's population. Therefore, Social Security has played, and continues to play, an important role in the lives of many beneficiaries and their families.

In addition to serving as a broad safety net for millions of Americans, Social Security is also the largest anti-poverty program. By some estimates, half of our nation's elderly (about 18 million people) would live in poverty if Social Security did not exist. Last year, two-thirds of the elderly in America were provided benefits from Social Security that represented at least half of their income. Social Security is more than simply a retirement program. More than a third of benefits go to widows or widowers, children, and the disabled.

LONG-TERM SOLVENCY

Social Security is our largest domestic social program. In 1996, the benefits paid out exceeded \$347 billion. Social Security has been able to pay these benefits with great efficiency. Administration costs for Social Security are about 1% of benefits, compared to the 12-14% that is typical for private insurance plans. But while the program has operated with relative efficiency over the years, there still remain significant challenges to the long-term financial health of Social Security. In particular, the impending increase in the number of retirees and the increase in

the life span of Americans both present other sets of challenges for the long-term solvency of Social Security.

The Social Security Trust Fund is currently solvent and is projected to remain solvent well into the next century. But the long-term changes in the workforce will place a major strain on its ability to pay full benefits for the baby boomers' retirement. Social Security will be able to pay all promised benefits including cost-of-living adjustments until the year 2032. After 2032, the trust fund will still be able to pay 75% of promised benefits. Thus if no adjustments are made between now and then, the trust fund will experience a shortfall, but will not be exhausted. Our current economic prosperity, and projected budget surpluses, though, offer a great opportunity to act now to avert the depletion of the trust fund.

#### REFORM PROPOSALS

The reform debate is focusing on three broad approaches to shore up Social Security.

**Incremental reform:** The first approach is to make modest adjustments to the existing program by reducing benefits and altering the taxation of benefits. For example, the working period over which a retiree's benefits are computed could be increased from 35 to 38 years. By taking into account the additional three years, a worker's earlier, and usually lower-paying, employment years would figure into her wage history, thereby lowering the level of benefits. Another proposal on the benefits side calls for adjusting the consumer price index so that it more accurately reflects the rate of inflation. On the tax side, the income threshold for taxation of Social Security benefits could be raised. Currently, only beneficiaries with incomes above certain annual thresholds, \$32,000 for married couples and \$25,000 for single people, owe taxes on their benefits.

**Means-testing:** A second basic approach to reform entails means-testing Social Security. This approach would involve reducing payments to beneficiaries who earn more than a specified income threshold. Advocates of means-testing argue that Social Security was designed to protect the elderly from financial adversity in old age, and that benefits could be reduced for those who are better off and have less of a need for benefits. Critics respond that means-testing might transform the public's perception of the program from one that benefits everyone to one that serves only low-income beneficiaries. This opens up the possibility of undermining the broad political base of support for the program.

**Privatization:** A third approach is to privatize the Social Security system. The main proposal would establish a system of Individual Retirement Accounts. These accounts would allow workers to invest their savings directly into higher yielding assets than government securities. Most proposals which include some type of private account would maintain a minimum level of benefits, lower than today's benefit level, while allowing an additional amount to be invested in the stock market. Both components would continue to be financed by payroll taxes. One major advantage of privatization would come from the potential higher returns that beneficiaries could obtain from the stock market. A down turn on the market, on the other hand, presents significant risks for any privatization plans.

#### CONCLUSION

Social Security has been a very successful program. The program provides nearly universal coverage of American workers and their dependents, as well as helping a significant number of the disabled and children. The program is progressive in offering larger

benefits relative to lifetime earnings for lower earners than for higher earners. It is an efficient program and is an important means to eliminating poverty. The program, however, clearly requires reform so that we can provide benefits to future generations of retirees. The challenge will be to enact reforms which build on the successes of the program, enjoy broad public support, and put the program on firm financial footing for generations to come.

#### J.J. "JAKE" PICKLE FEDERAL BUILDING

SPEECH OF

**HON. LAMAR S. SMITH**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 14, 1998*

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support H.R. 3223, a bill designating the J.J. "Jake" Pickle Federal Building in Austin, Texas.

Though Jake has been out of office for 5 years, his former constituents and fellow Texans still call on him and respect him because they all know what everyone knows about Jake—he really cares.

Throughout his 30 years in Washington he never forgot who sent him or why he was there—to make the lives of his constituents and all Americans better.

Of course no building named after Jake would be complete without the words "Howdy, Howdy, Howdy" inscribed over the entryway! Surely he is the quintessential Texan.

All of us—Republicans and Democrats—continue to admire and appreciate Jake Pickle.

#### THANK YOU TO THE CREW OF "JOHN C. STENNIS"

**HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 15, 1998*

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, today the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces stand guard in defense of our vital interests in the Persian Gulf. These dedicated men and women stand ready to respond to the latest crisis in the Middle East with the most advanced and capable weapons systems available. A few months ago as the United States prepared to strike Iraq, the news media flooded the airwaves with stories about our military personnel in the Gulf. After the crisis, the media left but thousands of our soldiers, sailors and airmen remained—on guard and at their posts.

One of the most difficult assignments in the Gulf is service at sea aboard the many naval vessels that ensure the U.S. retains a unilateral ability to defend our interests in a crisis. Much of the work is long, tedious and boring but let us make no mistake about it—the fate of the world's economy and our national security depend on these men and women in uniform.

I want to take this moment to thank the men and women of our armed services who are currently serving in the Gulf for their dedication to duty and their commitment to their

country. I also want to send a specific thank you to the crew of the U.S.S. *JOHN C. STENNIS* (CVN 74) who form the backbone of our commitment to Gulf security. Under the able leadership of the Battlegroup Commander, RADM Ralph Suggs, the ship's Commanding Officer, Captain Douglas Roulstone, and the Executive Officer, CDR Wade Tallman, our newest aircraft carrier and pride of the fleet is the reason why Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi leadership are kept at bay. These Navy leaders took a brand new ship and crew and welded them into a team that is now a cornerstone in our nation's security.

A member of my staff recently served with this crew as they prepared for the Gulf. He reminded me that long after CNN and the other networks left the Gulf, our people in the nation's sea service remained on duty in the Gulf. While I cannot read the names of the whole crew, I wanted to send a special thank you from the Congress to the ship's intelligence staff who are the eyes and ears of the Battlegroup, watching any threat which may intend harm for America and her allies. In specific, I want to thank the following sailors for their service.

CDR Paula L. Moore, LCDR William P. Hamblet, LCDR Cecil R. Johnson, LT Claudio C. Biltoc, LT Wayne S. Grazio, LT Constance M. Greene, LT Amy L. Halin, LT Michael C. McMahon, LT Michael S. Prather, LTJG Jason S. Alznauer, LTJG Kwame O. Cooke, LTJG Joe A. Earnst, LTJG Ben H. Eu, LTJG Neil A. Harmon, LTJG Kevin J. McHale, LTJG Alexander W. Miller, LTJG Eric C. Mostoller, LTJG Kevin E. Nelson, LTJG John M. Schmidt, ENS Curtis D. Dewitt, ENS Joseph M. Spahn, CWO2 Robert G. Stephens, ISCS(SW) Mary B. Buzuma, CTIC Andrea C. Elwyn, CTRC(SW/AW) Leroy Dowdy, ISC Nancy A. Heaney, PHC(AW) Troy D. Summers, CTO1 William L. Beitz, IS1 Janice E. Bevel, CTR1 Theresa L. Covert, CTR1 Charlene Duplanter, PH1 Lewis E. Everett, CTA1 Jennifer L. Fojtik, IS1 Matthew E. Hatcher, CTM1(SW) Susan C. Kehner, IS1(AW) Kevin E. King, CTT1 John E. Schappert, CTT1 Marx A. Warren, CTR1(SW/AW) Kevin R. Webb, PH1(AW) James M. Williams, CTR2 Francis E. Algers, IS2 Zachary C. Alyea, PH2 Clinton C. Beaird, IS2 Brandon G. Brooks, DM2 Chad A. Dulac, IS2 Sean M. Fitzgerald, PH2(AW) Brain D. Forsmo, CTR2 Sarah A. Fuselier, IS2 Brent L. George, IS2 Richard M. Gierbolini, IS2 Christopher S. Holloman, CTR2 Kevin J. Hubbard, PH2 Leah J. Kanak, CTI2(NAC) Paula C. Keefe, IS2 Angel Morales, IS2 Matthew W. Nace, CTI2(NAC) Eric S. Newton, CTO2 Milton T. Pritchett, IS2 Richard J. Quinn, IS2 Lee E. Redenbo, CTR2 Michael A. Santichi, IS2 Bryan S. Stanley, IS2 Mark A. Szypula, PH2(AW) Jadye A. Theobald, CTI2 Sarah A. Vogel, PH3(SW) Robert M. Baker, IS3 Gere L. Beason, IS3 Michael J. Barrencea, PH3 Richard J. Brunson, CTO3 Michael H. Buxton, PH3 Jomo K. Coffea, IS3 Terry D. Cooper, IS3 Trinity A. Durrell, CTR3 Angel Garay-Guzman, CTR3 George W. Hall, PH3 Sandra Harrison, CTO3 Yacha C. Hodge, IS3 Mark T. Kenny, CTT3 David E. Kozacek, PH3 Michael L. Larson, PH3(SW) Stephen E. Massone, CTI3 Dennis M. Paquet, IS3 Christopher P. Petrofski, IS3 Christopher D. Ross, IS3 John C. Shirah, CTT3 Gus Smalls, PH3 Alicia C. Thompson, CTM3 Jonathan R. Thompson, PH3 Kevin R. Tidwell, CTR3 Malina N. Townsend, IS3 William T. Tyre, CTR3 Thomas J.