



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 109<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2005

## *House of Representatives*

# ENCOURAGE INITIATIVE AND SELF-ESTEEM!

**HON. BOB FILNER**

OF CALIFORNIA  
IN THE HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge support for a bill I have just introduced, H.R. 4095, the Encourage Initiative and Promote Self-Esteem Act of 2005.

There are many people in our country who receive Social Security Disability benefits (SSD) because they have a “waxing and waning” disease—Behcet’s Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Lupus, Parkinson’s, Cancer, AIDS and Arthritis are examples of “waxing and waning” diseases. Eric Peterson, who lives in my Congressional District, has taught me a great deal about these diseases and the need for a better way for people to seek and keep SSD.

This process of seeking SSD and keeping it is often times an adversarial one. The climate of suspicion that applicants and recipients say they feel leaves many to view the Social Security Administration (SSA) with a jaundiced eye. Everyone who actually gains disability benefits remembers the hoops of fire they had to jump through during the application process. As a result, many people often do not consider a try at working, fearing that the SSA will use that against them to deny future benefits. With concerns over fraudulent claims, I can understand how this environment came to be. But that doesn’t make it right.

For people with “waxing and waning”

diseases and conditions, they know that they will have good days and bad. They know that, barring a cure, they will always be sick, but that does not diminish their spirit. There needs to be a program that encourages people in this situation to secure temporary employment when they feel they can work without placing their SSD at risk for the times they cannot work.

H.R. 4095 would install a system based on a sliding scale. The more money one earns, the fewer benefits he or she receives. But there will be a built-in incentive to stay the course because the total monthly income when working will be more than either the work income or SSD.

Imagine a situation where those on SSD who have diseases that “wax and wane” could work, without fear, when able. That would be a lot of money put back into the Treasury in payroll withholdings and taxes—and more money put into the economy in increased purchasing, not to mention the contribution to society and elevated self-esteem of the workers. Think about the faith these people would have in a system of government that treats its people with dignity and respect instead of suspicion and contempt.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 4095 to improve the lives of thousands of Americans.