

HENRY A. WAXMAN, CALIFORNIA,
CHAIRMAN

TOM LANTOS, CALIFORNIA
EDOLPHUS TOWNS, NEW YORK
PAUL E. KANJORSKI, PENNSYLVANIA
CAROLYN B. MALONEY, NEW YORK
ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS, MARYLAND
DENNIS J. KUCINICH, OHIO
DANNY K. DAVIS, ILLINOIS
JOHN F. TIERNEY, MASSACHUSETTS
WM. LACY CLAY, MISSOURI
DIANE E. WATSON, CALIFORNIA
STEPHEN F. LYNCH, MASSACHUSETTS
BRIAN HIGGINS, NEW YORK
JOHN A. YARMUTH, KENTUCKY
BRUCE L. BRALEY, IOWA
ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON,
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BETTY McCOLLUM, MINNESOTA
JIM COOPER, TENNESSEE
CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, MARYLAND
PAUL W. HODES, NEW HAMPSHIRE
CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY, CONNECTICUT
JOHN P. SARBANES, MARYLAND
PETER WELCH, VERMONT

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5051
FACSIMILE (202) 225-4784
MINORITY (202) 225-5074
TTY (202) 225-6852

<http://oversight.house.gov>

TOM DAVIS, VIRGINIA,
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

DAN BURTON, INDIANA
CHRISTOPHER SHAYS, CONNECTICUT
JOHN M. McHUGH, NEW YORK
JOHN L. MICA, FLORIDA
MARK E. SOUDER, INDIANA
TODD RUSSELL PLATTS, PENNSYLVANIA
CHRIS CANNON, UTAH
JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR., TENNESSEE
MICHAEL R. TURNER, OHIO
DARRELL E. ISSA, CALIFORNIA
KENNY MARCHANT, TEXAS
LYNN A. WESTMORELAND, GEORGIA
PATRICK T. McHENRY, NORTH CAROLINA
VIRGINIA FOXX, NORTH CAROLINA
BRIAN P. BILBRAY, CALIFORNIA
BILL SALI, IDAHO
— —

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN DANNY K. DAVIS AT THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL WORKFORCE, POSTAL SERVICE, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HEARING ON FEDERAL BENEFITS

August 2, 2007

Welcome, Ranking Member Marchant, members of the Subcommittee, hearing witnesses, and all those in attendance. Much like the Federal Pay hearing the Subcommittee held on Tuesday, today's hearing to get an overview of insurance and retirement benefits available to federal workers.

Future hearings will focus on the existing benefits programs discussed today. However, the federal government must keep current in the types of benefits it offers employees if it is to attract and maintain a quality workforce.

The federal government's life and health insurance programs were created in the mid 1950s and the early 1960s. The mid 1980s brought us a new retirement system called FERS and the late 1990s early 2000s ushered in paid organ donor leave, long term care and dental-vision insurance. In some cases the government shares benefit costs, in others, the employee pays all.

While we examine the administration and operation of existing programs, we must begin discussions on future benefit options for federal employees. Today, I will be circulating a draft legislative proposal to federal employee stakeholders that would provide 8 weeks of paid leave for the birth or adoption of a child and 4 weeks of paid leave for elder care or the serious health condition of a spouse or child. The proposal would also increase the age, from 22 to 25, that young adults can receive health insurance benefits under FEHBP. I look forward to working with the Office of Personnel Management and employee groups over the recess so this "cradle to independence" legislation can be introduced in the fall.

On March 14, I introduced H.R. 1518, "to allow employees of federally qualified health centers to obtain health coverage under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program." It is my hope that this legislation draws attention to the fact that health centers across this country are finding it more and more difficult to provide affordable health insurance to their own employees.

I understand that Reps. Tom Davis and Jim Moran have legislative proposals of their own that will benefit federal employees. I look forward to hearing their recommendations and the recommendations of OPM and the employee groups on how to improve the federal government's benefits programs.

Thank you.