

G. V. Sonny Montgomery Weekly Radio Show

Date: May 18, 1994

Audio begins at 00:19

Interviewer: This is Congressman Sonny Montgomery's weekly radio report from Washington. It was recently reported that the Social Security Administration paid 32 million dollars in bonuses to its employees last year. This comes at a time when Social Security disability cases are back logged throughout the country. What was your reaction to that report?

Montgomery: I was disappointed by the Social Security system. In fact, they came to the Congress and asked more money to run the Social Security system but yet they just paid out 32 million dollars in bonuses. The bonuses are way too high and the jobs are good, they should be promoted, and they're supposed to do a good job anywhere when you work for the government but not high bonuses. You give pay raises or time of service to get pay raise, but this is ridiculous, 32 million dollars for bonuses and one person that's only been in the government 76 days and I think he got over 9000 dollars. This is wrong. We've had problem's down in Jackson which is part of my district on handling Social Security claims. They've been very late down there but I will say the administrator that handles Social Security claims came to see me here in Washington and we're getting the situation straightened out. They're taking claims away from the Jackson office and putting them around in other offices to speed up the process. Now that doesn't mean that all of these claims are going to be paid but it means you're going to get an answer and it's not gone take 9, 10 months or a year and a half to answer 'em but we've got to be careful on these bonuses. All all federal government does and we outta stop it. We outta pay 'em on merit and at time they've served and if they deserve a promotion of a certain grade then they get it. But but not not bonuses when we're having such a tough time now trying to make ends meet.

Interviewer: This week efforts will be made to kill the registration process for the Selective Service System. You're in consideration of the Department of Defense Authorization Bill. What are your thoughts on this?

Montgomery: Let me go back again to the Social Security system, we get criticism about our pay and pay raises. We block that Congress, Congress block that. We shouldn't be getting a pay raise now that we have these problems so we're during more than lip service up here. We stop these pay raises and we should as members of Congress. Now back to your question on Selective Service Systems. Someone's gone offer an amendment this week that eliminates the Selective Service that says that young men reaching the age of 18 will not have to go to the post office and and and register. Now I'm totally against this, we need Selective Service System. It's it's just an emergency that we have to have in case we become involved, good example will be the Persian Gulf War. We were very fortunate that we didn't have to go to the Selective Service System. If this war would have lasted another 6 months and we would have had heavy casualties we would've had to go to the draft which the Selective Service System leads into. But the only

ones that really seem to be griping about the Selective Service System is the Congress itself. The young men who registered don't have any problems with it. Over 96% of 'em registered last year, they're proud to carry their cards in their wallets to show that they do have patriotism. And so, I think it'd be a terrible mistake to eliminate the Selective Service System. It costs the taxpayers of this country less than 20 million dollars a year to have a backup in case we had some terrible situation around the world. So, I hope we can defeat this amendment. I was told that President Clinton will come out against this amendment to eliminate Selective Service System and this will help us.

Interviewer: It was made official last week that former Mississippi Governor Ray Mabus will be nominated to be U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Will he have any problems with the confirmation process?

Montgomery: I don't think so. You never know. Something could come up that we're not sure of. But I think it's an excellent selection by President Clinton that Ray Mabus would serve as the ambassador to Saudi Arabia. As you know I'm a close friend Prince Bandar who's the ambassador from Saudi Arabia to the United States and I probably will take the Governor down to meet Bandar but I don't think he'll have any problems and I think the President's selection of Ray Mabus was excellent to be ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

Interviewer: Thank you Congressman. This has been Congressman Sonny Montgomery's weekly radio report from Washington.

Audio ends at 05:18