

STATEMENT BY THE HONORABLE JOHN E. FOGARTY, 2nd DISTRICT OF  
RHODE ISLAND, UPON INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 5041 IN THE UNITED  
STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO EXTEND THE FEDERAL OLD AGE  
AND SURVIVORS INSURANCE SYSTEM TO MINISTERS OF RELIGION.

5/6/53

I am today introducing a bill which is designed to provide Old Age and Survivors' Insurance coverage for Ministers of Religion. This will bring into the Social Security Program a large group of men genuinely deserving of the benefits provided by this program.

The coverage of Ministers of Religion has been discussed for several years. Many Ministers have talked with me about the problem. The difficulty has always been the working out of a satisfactory formula.

Legislation, to be satisfactory must respect the dignity of these men of Religion and at the same time be administratively workable.

During the last session of the 82nd Congress, there were at least two bills introduced which sought to provide this coverage but they appeared unsatisfactory to me.

During the present session, there have been several bills introduced, notably those presented by Rep. Kean of New Jersey, Rep. Rains of Alabama, and Rep. Shelley of California. While these bills are laudable in their purpose they all seem to have some shortcoming. For this reason, I have drafted legislation which I am sure is administratively workable and at the same time in keeping with the dignified position which these men occupy in our society.

My principal complaint with the bills already proposed is their treatment of Ministers of Religion as "employees." I don't like

that concept and I feel certain Ministers themselves do not look upon themselves as "employees" in any sense. There is a distinctive relationship between Ministers and their flocks - and between Ministers and their Religious Superiors. I think the bill I am offering recognizes that unusual relationship.

In addition, I am extremely reluctant to approve federal legislation which treats the income of Ministers and Priests as "wages" in the same context as that term appears in the section of the Internal Revenue Code which must be amended in order to provide this OASI coverage. The bill which I am offering, while including the cash income of Ministers and Priests in the Internal Revenue Code, for reporting purposes, treats that income as an independent item.

These different concepts which I am suggesting, I feel certain, will be acceptable to those Members of Congress who have demonstrated such great interest in the problem, and to Ministers of Religion who would desire this coverage.

I might add, my bill follows the voluntary pattern for coverage which is embodied in the other bills which have been introduced.