

Congress wants pension security

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congress passed major pension legislation designed to assure American workers, including millions of baby boomers nearing the end of their working careers, that the pensions they have been promised will be there when they retire.

The Senate, in its last vote before adjourning for a four-week summer break, approved the 900-page bill that compels employers with defined-benefit pension plans to meet their funding obligations and seeks to prevent companies from terminating plans and shifting the financial burden to the taxpayer. The House passed the bill last week.

The 93-5 Senate vote late Thursday on the pension bill came shortly after the Senate fell four votes short of the 60 needed to advance a Republican-crafted package that combined an estate tax cut with a federal minimum wage increase.

Republican leaders, unsuccessful earlier this year in moving an estate tax cut through the Senate, tried to attract Democratic votes by linking it to a package of popular middle-class tax breaks and

Man unsure how to explain his past

The Colby Free Press is sampling advice columns. Please tell us what you think of them.

BY DR. JOYCE BROTHERS

Dear Dr. Brothers: I am in my late 20s and have been dating a great woman who is quite different from the wild types I usually go out with. She is very religious, and I think somewhat naive. In any case, my past is rather more checkered than hers, and she has been pressing me to tell her all about my relationships. I don't want to scare her off, but I don't want to lie, either. Do you think being truthful will wreck what we have? — T.O.

Dear T.O.: If you feel that this relationship is anything but a novelty to you, it would be a good idea to try to approach the subject earnestly and with candor. That is, unless you feel your girlfriend is just trying to tease or taunt you in some way, or is actively looking for a reason to break up. Those would not be good reasons to spill your guts to her. On the other hand, have you considered the fact that because she is so innocent and practically a blank slate when it comes to sexual adventures, she is trying to pull out of you some safe vicarious experiences — cheap thrills, even? Either scenario is possible!

More likely, though, is the middle path — one on which you are both wandering, sizing up each other. Is she too much of a "goody-goody" to hold your interest or fit into your accustomed lifestyle? Are you too much of a "bad boy" for her tastes? Or is she ready to move on and form an adult relationship, complete with sexual exploration? In any case, should you decide to share the highlights of your past with her, I wouldn't be too specific, at least at first. Leave her with glittering generalities — nothing she can throw back in your face at a later time — and focus on the positive in your past relationships. It's OK to kiss and tell — but you don't have to tell all.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I am a woman who has waited a while to have a baby — I'm 37. I've had a successful career for 15 years, and while I have now made the decision to become a full-time mother for the first several years — I think that is best for the child — I am wondering how I will feel about being just mom. I am thrilled about motherhood but wonder if I will suffer a psychological letdown because of leaving my job, with all its excitement and rewards. Can you give me any good tips? — A.N.

Dear A.N.: It is sometimes quite frightening to go from being a corporate executive to "just a mom." One of the main reasons is that your identity at work is very well-defined; you can point to your name on the corporate staff chart and know exactly where you belong and what you are supposed to be doing. And so can everyone else. When you are thrown into the parenthood pool to sink or swim, along with all sorts of other moms — some who might never have worked outside the home — it can be an abrupt transition that might sink your sense of identity to parts unknown.

Perhaps you are worried that you won't be able to stick with

your worthy goal of mothering your child until he or she goes to school. That would be a shame. Try to start connecting now with other moms who have had careers. You will find the new world of babies a very social one, with mother-and-child groups, classes for moms and tots, etc. You just have to find your niche. By the way, as a former corporate woman, you might take to the newest craze, a twist on business cards. You print up some "mommy cards" that you can hand out to compatible moms you meet in the park. Play date, anyone?

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