the kids. Are we saying that the Federal Government can't afford to buy a hungry child lunch?

It is essential that we continue these nutritional programs. The School Breakfast Program as we know it today provides a child with one-fourth of the daily recommended dietary allowance. The School Lunch Program—which serves over 13 million children—provides about one-third or more of the daily recommended dietary allowance for children. These nutritional programs have standardized dietary allowance by the Federal Government. If we remove the Federal Government's input, it will be up to each State to set dietary standards for their program. This could mean 50 different sets of standards to feed our Nation's children. Is it fair to expect the States to maintain these nutrition programs and still feed hungry children when in fact they will receive a reduction in Federal assistance? We will be asking them to do more with less.

Over the past several days, I have received a great number of letters from elderly constituents in my congressional district. They ask only one thing—please do not eliminate the meal programs which serve the elderly population—such as the Meals on Wheels Program.

□ 2050

These programs are funded through the Older Americans Act and are not considered welfare programs. Yet these programs are being considered in the welfare reform package and to be block grant to States. Great reductions are proposed.

It is apparent that nutrition is essential for people to be productive members of their communities. Malnutrition, or undernutrition, will only promote poor health and productivity problems—as well as social problems. Let's face it, people will do whatever is necessary to feed their children.

Again, I agree that the welfare system needs reform. But why cut programs that are working. We can't lay the blame of an unbalanced budget solely on the cost of these programs since less than 3 percent of the budget is targeted for feeding the hungry. And statistics indicate that for every dollar spent on WIC, between $2 and $4 are saved in health care costs. As for the elderly, it is a fact that a hospital stay for a malnourished senior citizen may double in comparison to a well-nourished senior—inflating the cost to Medicare an additional $2,000 to $10,000 a day.

I come from a very rural, very poor district. Making cuts in these nutrition programs will certainly be adverse to my district, and to many of my constituents.

Let's stop picking on our elderly—let's stop picking on the children—let's stop picking on the poor—let's make some cuts, sure, but let's make them to the people who can afford them—not by taking food out of the mouths of children and senior citizens.

The Republican welfare reform really goes too far to deny poor children and senior citizens from a needed healthy meal.

IMMIGRANTS AND THE NUTRITION BLOCK GRANT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GEKAS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. BECERRA] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to speak on the issue of welfare reform and specifically the legislation proffered by the majority party in the Contract on America, H.R. 4. I want to rise today to voice my concerns with that portion of H.R. 4 which talks about block granting all the nutrition programs that currently exist to provide assistance to our young children in this country who are unfortunate enough to be poor.

H.R. 4 calls for the elimination of all the Federal food assistance programs, which would include WIC, food stamps, and school lunches. It would clump all of them together in a block grant at substantially reduced funding levels. Reduced funding levels will lead to fewer people being served and also will not take into account the increased need for food assistant program during economic downturns.

As hard as it may be to believe, this is not the only disconcerting aspect of H.R. 4. This bill not only proposes to limit funds provided for nutrition, it also intends to cut off immigrants, legal immigrants from the very start of any program. No service or assistance to legal immigrant children, even though their parents are here at the invitation of this country, even though these parents pay every single same tax that American citizens pay and even though these parents are obligated and do serve in our military in time of war. All responsibilities are there for the parents of these legal immigrant children. Yet the services paid for in part by the tax dollars of these legal immigrant parents would not be there for these children.

Though they receive less attention, the immigrant children, in this whole debate on welfare reform, the provisions of H.R. 4 which deal with immigrant eligibility for Federal benefits need to have clarity. H.R. 4 would completely withdraw the safety net from nearly all legal immigrants, immigrants, as I said before, who came to this country with every right to be here because they were told by this country that they could come in.

Sixty programs would be eliminated from participation of immigrants and their children. Immigrants would be barred from all of the major Federal programs for job training, human investment, as well as those that provide nonemergency health care, housing, nutrition, cash assistance for women, children, seniors, and persons with disabilities.

This means, for example, a 6-month-old baby who came here with his mother would be ineligible for basic vaccinations.

A 7-year-old legally present in the United States would be denied foster care and adoption assistance upon the death of her parents.

A 23-year-old woman legally present in the United States, forced from her home in flight from an abusive husband, would be denied job training, child care, and other services coordinated by a battered women's shelter.

A 35-year-old man granted political asylum here after fleeing torture in his native land for his religious beliefs would be ineligible to receive canned goods from the food bank run by his local church.

A 60-year-old woman who emigrated legally when she was 15 years old and who has worked in the United States all of her life would be rendered ineligible for Medicaid to treat her dangerous heart condition.

These things would occur because this is where the new majority party thinks it could find so-called savings. In fact, the savings which result from denying benefits to legal immigrants represents less than 3 percent of the 5-year budget of the affected programs.

I strongly support a reappraisal of our welfare system and Government spending. However, in this case, it seems that a great number of people would be hurt for an almost insignificant financial gain.

What is the practical application of H.R. 4's restriction? How would this work in the following scenarios, for example? Looking at school breakfast and lunch, a brother and sister whose parents have recently become unemployed begin their school year.

Will the brother, who was born in this country, be eligible for a subsidized lunch while his sister, born in Russia, will be ineligible because she is not yet a citizen?

Will poor immigrant children be further stigmatized because their family cannot afford lunch money for their kids? Will they stay out of the lunchroom altogether because they are embarrassed because they are immigrants?

Is this constitutional? Based on the Supreme Court decision in Plyler versus Doe, immigration status is irrelevant when the right to education is considered. Following World War II, Congress approved the National School Lunch Act as a measure of national security to safeguard the health and well-being of our Nation's children.

I think it becomes clear, Mr. Speaker, to say it makes no sense to deny these children the basic benefits, and I would hope that we would reevaluate H.R. 4.

Mr. Speaker, further, the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 was enacted "in recognition of the demonstrated relationship between food and good nutrition in the capacity of children to develop and learn." Is the health and well-being of our children no longer an issue of national security? Is there some new evidence disproving the relationship between nutrition and learning? Is it the intent of H.R. 4 to change our Constitution?

Looking at the Women Infants and Children Program [WIC], which provides coupons for

food staples such as milk and eggs to very poor pregnant women to meet basic nutritional needs, we find that through WIC:

Medicaid costs were reduced on average about $12,000 to $15,000 per infant for every very low birthweight baby.

On the initial investment, total saving in health and education related expenditures over the 18 years of life of WIC children amounted to over $1 billion.

Setting aside the issue of humanity for a moment, are we willing to incur these huge debts just because immigrants have become unpopular? The WIC Program has proven itself over and over again; why stop the savings we know we can accrue?

Are we willing to deny a pregnant woman who is a legal immigrant—whose child will be a citizen at birth—the benefits of the WIC Program? Are we willing to all but guarantee the birth of a low birthweight citizen?

And as for emergency food aid, are we willing to say that a legal immigrant who is disabled on the job and becomes unemployed can't go to a soup kitchen?

In recent days, there have been reports that the Republicans may resolve the matter by allowing individual States to decide whether their noncitizen residents will be barred from aid. A Republican Member was quoted as saying, ''We should not be mandating to the States how they should best decide who they consider most deserving and most in need of social assistance.'' What do you suppose would have happened if there had never been a Brown versus Board of Education Supreme Court decision? Do we now value one person in this country more than another? What message does this send to legal immigrants? Why should they feel less worthy than any other individual?

Why should one baby born to a law-abiding mother not get benefits when another baby will? We cannot begin this debate by stigmatizing a whole group of people who certainly do not deserve it. Welfare reform is supposed to be about fixing the system and giving people a chance to succeed. Let's not get confused and try to balance the budget on the backs of immigrants.

The Senate has said it will not pass legislation which would cut off benefits to noncitizen immigrants. I think this is the only option we have before us. I encourage all Members to reject a proposal that has at its base a return to segregation; but this time it is segregation where one group of people is stigmatized, discriminated against, and denied access to programs simply because the people—regardless of how responsible and committed to this country they may be—were not born in this country.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, the Republican proposal to block grant current Federal nutrition programs such as WIC, Food stamps, and the School Breakfast and Lunch programs is a terrible mistake. The proposed block grant will shift the responsibility to the states without providing adequate funding and will hurt America's most vulnerable, the children and elderly.

Mr. Speaker, everything in government is not broken. These programs were started in response to documented problems of malnutrition in the United States. These programs have a proven track record—they have improved the nutrition and health of low-income people in this country. Food stamp benefits across the country are tied to the cost of a modestly-priced nutritious diet sufficient to sustain an active, health life. The key components of WIC include food packages tailored to specific nutrition requirements, nutrition education, health care referrals, and immunization screening. The Child Nutrition programs contain standards that ensure that school meals served to America's children meet certain nutritional requirements. These programs serve as an important safety net for low-income families, especially working families with children.

In an effort to cut government spending and deliver on their elected promise to downsize the federal government, the Republicans have targeted an easy, non-voting population—America's poor and hungry children. Their proposed block grant would result in a reduction of at least 30 billion over the next five years. Their proposed block grant would also set a cap on annual appropriations in years to come. Anti-hunger programs would be subject to political whim and could never be adjusted for changes in unemployment, poverty, school enrollment or to respond to natural disasters like the recent flooding in California. While we are experiencing an economic recovery today—only those with a crystal ball can predict what will happen tomorrow.

Most of the larger anti-hunger programs—including food stamp, school lunch, and school breakfast programs are entitlements. This means the programs provide benefits to any low-income household or child who applies and meets the programs' eligibility conditions. These programs expand during recessions as unemployment rises and the number of low-income people qualifying for food stamps and free school meals grow. This funding structure has proved crucial to the success of these programs in reducing hunger in the United States. The proposed block grant will threaten their success.

These federal nutrition programs serve as an important safety net for low-income families and children. In Ohio, our food stamp and school lunch programs serve almost one million children. If this block grant passes, Ohioans and Americans will wind up paying the price in higher health care costs, larger social service budgets, and ultimately in adults ill-equipped to contribute productively to an economy that demands highly skilled and versatile workers.

Mr. Speaker, children are one of my highest priorities. The School Lunch Program provides school children with one-third or more of their Recommended Dietary Allowance [RDA] for key nutrients. The School Breakfast Program provides children with one-fourth or more of their RDA for key nutrients. The Food Stamp program increases the nutritional quality of diets of the 14 million children that live in households that are poor. Five million children receive meals in the summer when school is not in session. These programs cannot be removed without serious negative consequences to our childrens' health.

There have been so many studies that link the detrimental effects of undernutrition on a child's ability to learn. Undernutrition impacts the behavior of children and their school performance. Undernutrition results in lost knowledge, brain power and productivity for the nation. The longer and more severe the malnutrition, the greater the likely loss and the cost to our country. Hungry children are 2 to 3 times more likely than other children to suffer from health problems such as anemia, headaches and an inability to concentrate—problems that make these children fail in school and become inadequately prepared for the job market. We can't in good conscience be unmoved when children go to bed hungry at night and without these programs, millions of children will go hungry because they are not getting enough to eat anywhere else.

Those who support the block grant claim that the proposal protects WIC and brings it to full funding. This is not accurate. To the contrary, the proposal poses serious dangers for WIC and the purposes it serves. Specifically there is no requirement that block grant funds be spent on WIC nor is there any requirement that WIC even be maintained as a program rather than be dismantled. The proposal actually contains a provision that creates an incentive for states to reduce or end WIC. WIC links food assistance and nutrition education with essential maternal and child health services. WIC functions as a magnet, drawing low-income women and children to health clinics where they receive prenatal and pediatric care and immunizations, as well as WIC benefits. WIC is good for the American people.

Historically, there has been bi-partisan support for these programs in both houses because those families with our anti-hunger programs know these programs as cost-effective. We know that for every dollar spent on WIC, we save between $2–$4 in health care costs in the future. The General Accounting Office estimated that in 1990 WIC benefits saved $740 million in health and special education expenditures. Total savings in health and education-related expenditures amount to over $1 billion for children through18 years of life who participated in WIC during early childhood. Our solutions need to be results oriented and move the participants out of poverty. It makes good economic sense to invest in programs that work so we don't pay more later.

Some reformers want us to send the problem of hunger to the States and hope the problem goes away. Well it won't. Block granting these programs does not make the problem go away, it simply shifts the responsibility to the states, without providing adequate funding. States could be forced to create waiting lists for food assistance or cut the amount given to each recipient.

The block grant funding levels would not automatically respond to increases in poverty during recessions, increases in school enrollment that result in more children needing school lunches and breakfasts, or increases in the number of low-income children enrolled in child care institutions and needing meals at these institutions. School enrollment is projected to rise in coming years. Child care enrollment also is expected to increase as more women are moved from welfare to work and the entry of mothers into the labor force continues. Continuing to invest in programs that work is a proven way to reduce the welfare rolls in the future.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to put aside the politics and start concentrating on people. Let us continue the bi-partisan spirit that has helped poor and hungry children over the last thirty years.

Let us continue the bi-partisan support of programs that work. I challenge my friends on the other side of the aisle to weigh the value

of these programs rather than make quick decisions in the name of downsizing federal government. It is time to end childhood hunger, not successful nutrition programs that feed hungry children.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the elderly and the millions of Americans, most of them children, who rely on the various nutrition programs funded by the local, State and Federal Governments.

Our friends on the other side of the aisle would have us believe that these nutrition programs are welfare and should be included in welfare reform.

Further, they indicate that these programs are overlapping, and that there is no need for several separate programs at the Federal level.

So they propose that these programs all be consolidated into a block grant to the States.

Then they take the next step—they would remove all nutrition guidelines currently in the programs, leaving it to the wisdom of State administrators to develop their own guidelines.

That proposal is wrong-headed from the start.

Federal nutrition programs, such as the School Lunch Program, were not created because of the welfare state.

At the end of World War II, as America looked back on its 5-year effort to rid the world of Nazi tyranny and Japanese aggression in the Pacific, a Republican Congress considered this country's state of readiness to field massive armies to deal with future aggressors.

Review of military physical records disclosed an alarming fact—many of the Nation's young potential recruits were barely able to pass selective service physicals—because of the effects of poor nutrition during their maturing years.

It was because of the necessity to ensure that future calls to arms would find healthy young people available to serve the Nation in time of war that the Congress developed the National School Lunch Program.

The program provided assistance to the Nation's local elementary and secondary educational schools with one purpose in mind—to ensure that the children attending those schools received at least one fully nutritious meal every school day, and, in cases where the child could not afford to pay for the meal, he or she received it at reduced or no cost.

So this was not created as a welfare program, and it is not a welfare program now—it is a program that enables the Nation to be more sure that its children will grow up healthy.

What are the direct economic costs of eliminating that program—let me list a few:

Our already out of control medical costs will increase as people age with a history of poor nutrition as children.

Studies confirm something we have known for over 50 years—poor nutrition as a child leads to increased illnesses as an adult.

Our economy suffers from increased employee absences, lower production at the workplace, and increased direct medical costs.

It this Congress removes the school lunch program direct funding, many school districts will find it impossible to sustain school cafeterias, and will terminate hot school lunch programs, leading to poorer nutrition for all students—and I mean all students—whether rich or poor.

Focused school lunch programs are also good for the economy because the national school lunch industry—and make no mistake about it, it is an industry—from the farmer who produces the milk and other foods, to the former welfare mother who finally landed a job in the cafeteria, and all of the processing, packaging and delivery workers in between will find themselves unemployed.

According to the Agriculture Department a loss of as many as 138,000 jobs.

At the other end of the spectrum we have the nutrition programs for senior citizens funded in part by HHS and the Agriculture Department.

The Federal contribution to senior citizen nutrition programs, along with significant funding by States, localities and private individuals and organizations, provide nutrition to senior citizens in two ways.

Where a senior citizen is homebound, either because of physical frailty, remoteness of the residence, or other cause, and regardless of the economic status of that individual, the nations aging services network can and does provide home delivered meals.

In some localities, this means a volunteer comes to the home every day and prepares the meal, or delivers one that the homebound senior can reheat.

In others, meals are delivered once a week, and the senior or a caregiver prepares the meal on a daily basis.

If the senior citizen can get out of the house, he or she may visit a senior citizen center—either one sponsored by the local area agency on aging or a private group—a church or synagogue, or a senior citizens' association—and join fellow seniors for lunch, and sometimes for dinner.

Where federal funds are used in these programs, no specific charge is made for the meals, although most senior centers solicit contributions.

Seniors of all economic classes are very willing to eat these meals, and 225 million meals were served in 15,000 community nutrition sites all over the United States.

In my discussions with senior citizen groups who operate congregate meal programs, I have often been told that it is in our Nation's poorest neighborhoods that elderly participants contribute the most money in voluntary collection boxes.

Why is this program so important. Because, again as studies over the past few decades have consistently shown, good nutrition among our aging population translates into significant savings in out health care system.

These meals provide highly directed nutrition, and a strong sense of social integration to a population that benefits immediately from those meals.

A healthy senior, who does not feel isolated from society and his or her peers, is active, productive and far less likely to need very expensive medical care or hospitalization.

Studies have shown that for every dollar spent on senior nutrition programs, a direct savings of three dollars in health care costs results.

So, if you want to save Federal dollars, and we all do, make sure you know where the costs are.

Protect the elderly who are responsible for the greatness of our Nation, protect the children who are our future.

Reject the Republican's misguided effort to destroy America's nutrition.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Georgia [Ms. MCKINNEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. MCKINNEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. KILDEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. KILDEE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. PASTOR] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. PASTOR addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

PROPOSED $40 BILLION UNITED STATES LOAN GUARANTEE TO MEXICO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. MENENDEZ] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, on November 18, 1993, I cast my vote against the NAFTA, not because I oppose free trade; not because I oppose the economic integration of the Western Hemisphere; and not because of the incomplete, albeit substantial, movement toward political and economic reform in recent years in Mexico. No—I cast my vote against the NAFTA because I believed that Mexico as an economy was not prepared to enter an argument of this magnitude with the United States.

I believed then as I believe now, that a more gradual approach toward economic integration, such as that adopted by the then-European Community toward nations seeking membership, is wiser. These nations were required to meet high economic and political standards before enjoying European Community benefits.

The hard-working families of the 13th District of New Jersey, which I represent, do not join exclusive clubs which they cannot afford. They do not buy expensive homes if they can't afford the down payment. They do their sweating at work—not in fancy health spas. These middle class families know their limits.

We should have anticipated the possibility of a peso devaluation. We should have regarded Mexico like the developing economy that it was—not as the developed economy we portrayed.

Many supporters of NAFTA told me that if I were to vote for NAFTA, I would be doing the right and responsible thing. Now they claim that the