

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak against the runaway legislative freight train that threatens to crush the lives of millions of America's children. In particular, as a Representative for the 18th Congressional District in the State of Texas, I acknowledge that there are businesses, small businesses, there are working people, middle class, but I also say that my district has a wealth of children who are in fact in need of school breakfasts and school lunches.

My Republican colleagues indicate and are the conductors of the unconscionable train. Mr. Speaker, we must realize that we have to stand for the children. We cannot lose \$670 million in my home State of Texas alone between now and the year 2000.

Mr. Speaker, let us not cut nutrition for our children, let us stand up and fight and uphold the Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, I must rise today to speak against the runaway legislative freight train that threatens to crush the lives of millions of America's children.

My colleagues from the other side of the aisle are the conductors of this unconscionable train, and they continue to drive that train at breakneck speed through this body without any consideration about what and who they will leave lying bloody on the tracks behind them.

Their agenda—already declared immoral by Cardinal John O'Connor—will slash child nutrition programs—more than \$670 million in my home State of Texas alone between now and the year 2000.

And now, as if nutrition cuts were not horrific enough, the mad conductors of the runaway train have set their sights on summer job programs. Bear in mind, these are the same folks who complain about welfare dependency and cycles of poverty. Do they not see, Mr. Speaker, that denying some 600,000 needy young people a summer job will only make it that much more difficult for them to get the work experience they'll need to break out of poverty?

Mr. Speaker, I fear these Republican conductors do not see the damage their runaway train will wreak because they are blinded by their zeal to cut taxes, with no real focus on the deficit of working Americans.

For the sake of America's children, this train must be stopped.

□ 1130

TIME FOR COMMONSENSE LEGAL REFORM

(Mr. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday this body began the monumental task of reforming America's legal system.

Mr. Speaker, for too many years ridiculous legal judgments have been handed down in frivolous lawsuits where the only real winners are the lawyers.

Mr. Speaker, some have suggested that we should leave this up to the individual States to decide. I am a true

federalist at heart and I believe that in States where the State statute is stronger than the Federal law that State law should prevail. But there are States where the abuses of the judicial system have run amuck.

Case in point, Alabama. Steve Flowers is a 13-year veteran of the Alabama legislature and chairman of the Insurance Committee for the Alabama House.

In 1987 Mr. Flowers was the primary sponsor of Alabama's legal reform legislation, but he now strongly favors Federal legislation in this area.

Why? Because in 1993 the Alabama Supreme Court in Henderson versus Alabama Power Company ruled that the Alabama legislature did not have the authority to impose limits on punitive damages.

Mr. Speaker, in the first 11 months of 1994, juries in Alabama awarded more than \$170 million in punitive damages, not including wrongful death actions.

The time is now for true commonsense legal reform. This body must act now to turn the tide of lawsuit abuse and pass this measure to protect hard working Americans from the long arm of the trial lawyers.

CONTRACT PUNCHES HOLES IN CONSTITUTION

(Mr. WATT of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, when I showed up yesterday with my hole puncher in one hand and the Constitution in the other hand and represented that the Contract With America was beginning to punch holes in the Constitution, I got calls yesterday saying, "Are you crying wolf?" So I went back and here is the record.

Line item veto, article I, section 1.

Effective death penalty action, habeas corpus, article I, section 9.

National Defense Revitalization Act, this review commission, article II, section 2.

Exclusionary Rule Reform Act, fourth amendment, punched a hole.

Takings legislation, fifth amendment, punched a hole, America.

The Contract With America is punching holes in our Constitution. As the Speaker comes in here to punch a hole in this contract, they are punching a hole in the Constitution of the United States.

WHAT IS REALLY GOING ON

(Mr. HOKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HOKE. I wonder if that applause coming from the other side of the aisle, if those Members who applauded, if perhaps they also voted back on the first day of Congress, of the 103d Congress, 1992, to seat delegates, to allow them to vote in the Committee of the Whole in contravention of article I,

section 2 of the Constitution, punch-punch.

We continue to hear the same thing over and over and over, and it just begins to make you wonder if you repeat it long enough and loud enough, if the big lie might not take effect, might not actually stick.

The fact is that we are increasing the amount of money that goes to School Lunch Programs. Everybody knows that on both sides of the aisle, including when one takes into effect demographics and changes in population.

What is amazing, though, is that the same lie would be repeated. So what is it all about? Is it not really just about power and the loss of constituencies and the loss of bases? I think that is really what is going on here.

Clearly those friends of mine on the other side of the aisle have been supported for years and years by the Federal employees PAC's, and that is really what is going on here.

SUPPORT FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

(Ms. NORTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, we are pedaling backward fast, crushing kids as we go. Cut the heat at home, cut the lunches at school. There is no escaping the cuts, kids.

Have we forgotten the shameful revelations of hunger and poverty that produced the American majority for school lunches, WIC and low income energy assistance? What about that contract?

Contracts are supposed to be win-win propositions. Tax cuts for the wealthy paid for with lunch money from kids is a rotten tradeoff. As \$5 billion wallop at WIC and child nutrition programs is child abuse.

If Washington cannot afford to feed hungry kids, cash-starved cities like the District will hardly be able to pick up the pieces—or the children. It is time we stopped eating our young and their lunches.

THE ALTERNATIVE MINIMUM TAX REPEAL ACT OF 1995

(Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Alternative Minimum Tax Repeal Act of 1995. It is my sincere hope that this legislation will provide a starting point for this Congress to consider eliminating economic distortions caused by the Tax Code and encourage new investment in manufacturing.

This legislation would repeal the alternative minimum tax that was created as part of the Tax Reform Act of 1986. This tax is a major impediment to

new investment for many capital intensive and rapidly growing manufacturing firms in the chemical, electronic equipment, energy, metal, paper, steel, and transportation industries. It is a parallel tax system that takes away a portion of a company's depreciation deductions if their income as computed under the alternative minimum formula is higher than their income calculated under the regular tax system.

While it was designed and intended to prevent otherwise profitable companies from escaping taxation altogether through the use of exclusions, deductions, and credits, it has instead resulted in large interest-free loans to the Government by companies that experienced real economic losses during the early 1990's. Congress never intended for companies to incur a permanent increase in tax liability due to this tax. Put simply, the alternative minimum tax is not working as it was intended.

While many members of the House Ways and Means Committee, on which I serve, are very concerned about this tax, by introducing this legislation I hope to ignite a broader interest in this exact type of much needed tax reform. I am pleased to offer this bill to the House.

LEAVE THE KIDS ALONE

(Mr. LEWIS of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I ate breakfast and lunch with students at two schools in Atlanta, Payton Forest Elementary School and Thomasville Heights Elementary School. Many of these children were receiving these meals through the School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. For some of them it was the first decent meal they had had since Friday, the last time they were in school.

Mr. Speaker, it is cold and heartless, it is just plain mean, for the Republican majority to deprive these children of their school breakfast and lunches. This program is a success. It provides the food necessary for children to learn. Children cannot learn on an empty stomach, they cannot learn if they are hungry.

The cost of my breakfast and lunch yesterday was a combined \$2.70. Surely, this is not too great a cost to pay to feed our children, to give them the nutrition they need to learn and to grow.

In their rush to provide tax breaks to the wealthy, the Republican majority would steal lunch money from our kids. I, for one, do not want any part of that contract and I don't think the American people do either.

THE SIMPLE FACTS

(Mr. HAYWORTH asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I certainly have a great deal of affection and admiration for the gentleman who preceded me here in the well. I was pleased to see that he was back at school as were many of my liberal Democrat colleagues yesterday. But the fact is that with all due respect, my friends should not spend time exclusively in the lunchroom, they should go back to math class, because here are the simple facts of this case.

We are actually increasing \$200 million in excess of what the President is calling for in school nutrition programs. We are calling for a 4.5-percent increase in these school nutrition programs. Yes, we are asking to fine tune the responsibility to give the responsibility to people on the front lines fighting the battle, but friends, it is an increase.

Only in Washington can an increase be called a cut and be called heartless and mean spirited when in fact we are public spirited trying to get control of this problem, trying to feed the truly needy and trying not to make this a crass political issue.

SUPPORT FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

(Mr. WARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WARD. Mr. Speaker, I have a prepared text for today to talk about child nutrition programs, but I have to react to what we have just been hearing. To say that they are not going to cut these child nutrition programs is the big lie, ladies and gentlemen, because if you make a block grant, you take last year's figure which may be higher than the year before's but say, "We are not going to raise it in the future, we are just going to let the States spend it," you are cutting it.

If you do not take into account economic downturns, if you do not take into account what happens in community after community across this country which may be different than what is happening here, and then have the audacity to blame the Democrat support on our connections with Federal bureaucrats, that is just too absurd for words.

Ladies and gentlemen, we need to continue to support our children.

FEAR TACTICS EMPLOYED IN SUPPORTING FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, pathetic is the only way to describe the message which has been emanating from the other side, trying to frighten the people of the United States of America

about our goals for dealing with the issue of child nutrition.

We do not have a cut. We have a 4.5-percent increase. That is very clear. But as my friend from the other side of the aisle just said, we somehow in transferring this to the States will in fact allow a tremendous cut to take place. Baloney. There is a provision in this legislation which states that 80 percent of those funds that are provided must go toward the nutrition program and the requirement also states that no more than a 2-percent overhead can be provided.

We are increasing the level of funding, we are trying to make it more responsible so that in fact we do not see what exists today, 20 percent of those young people benefiting from the program coming from homes with incomes in excess of \$50,000 a year.

We want the truly needy to benefit from this, we are increasing the level of funding for it, and they should quit the kind of fear tactics that they are imposing.

TORT REFORM

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. I will not even address the lies coming from the other side.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about tort reforms we are considering this week. They are important to every citizen in this country, so important that each of the 50 States is currently considering some type of overhaul of their own legal system.

In my home State of Texas, Governor Bush has declared a state of emergency to address these reforms and with good cause. Texas ranked fourth in the Nation in million-dollar verdicts between 1990 and 1993. Lawsuit abuse is out of control, so out of control it is crippling businesses, destroying jobs, and costing every household in Texas \$2,700 per year.

Last year alone in Texas prisons there were 1,000 suits filed by prisoners for crazy reasons. One for being licked. Yeah, I said licked by a horse while on a work detail.

The time has come for my colleagues to take a giant step for America and answer the plea seen on a billboard in a town in south Texas that reads, "Stop Lawsuit Abuse Now."

FIXING THE WELFARE MESS

(Mr. RIGGS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I first of all will join with my colleagues who have used adjectives such as pathetic and audacious to describe the fear tactics and the continuing politics of envy that we hear coming from the other side of the aisle. I will add another,