

though, adjective to describe what I have been seeing take place, and that is unconscionable. It is unconscionable for the House Democratic Party to treat welfare recipients as a political constituency for political gain.

Mr. Speaker, Americans have said that they are sick of a failed liberal welfare system that traps people in a cycle of dependency. Five million families, 9 million kids on AFDC, and at any given time over 50 percent of those families have been on AFDC welfare for over 10 years.

It is a system that ruins generation after generation, a system that has cost us as a country \$5 trillion while making the situation worse. Two out of three black babies born out of wedlock, 20 percent of white children born out of wedlock.

Mr. Speaker, the American people want us to fix the welfare mess before it does any more damage and fix it, we will.

□ 1145

WELFARE REFORM

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

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I have been sitting here listening to the speakers that came before me here this morning on the House floor criticizing the Republicans for what they are trying to do that is to reform welfare, criticizing the Republicans for bringing a child support bill to the floor and saying that it was not tough enough.

I will say to my friends in the Democrat Party you had 40 years to bring welfare reform to the floor and you never brought it; you had 40 years to bring a child support bill to the floor that was tough, and you never did it.

Now we are looking to you and we are reaching out to you as we are to the President, who gave a speech within the last hour on welfare reform, we are reaching out and saying come now and join with us because we are moving it forward. We are going to have welfare reform. It is going to pass this House. We are going to have a lot of Democrats that are going to be joining the Republicans who are pushing this agenda forward.

And you know what? We are going to be doing things for the poor that you never did. We are going to be doing things for the children that you neglected and we are going to reform welfare.

SUPPORT FOR TORT REFORM

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

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise today and speak in support of the tort reform or lawsuit reform being brought before

the House by the Republican leadership. As a physician who has practiced medicine in the community for the past 7 years, I can say that I have seen firsthand the terrible effect of this runaway problem with lawsuits on our Nation and in particular on our ability to practice good, high quality, cost effective medicine.

The people who have been paying for this runaway crisis in excessive lawsuits are the people of the United States. The patients have been playing the costs.

The time has arrived, it is long overdue. Reform is needed and reform is now, this week, before the House of Representatives. And I beseech all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support the Republican programs for dealing with this problem in our Nation and restoring true balance to our criminal and civil justice system.

DEMOCRATS SCARING CHILDREN ABOUT SCHOOL LUNCHES

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

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, last week the Speaker of the House, NEWT GINGRICH, went out to a school here in Washington, DC, to try to support a program called the Earn and Learn Program. That is where they pay children \$2 for reading a book and it is to encourage kids to learn. It is a great program; it is being adopted in many schools across this country.

But before he got there, two Members of the Democrat minority went out there and had lunch with the kids and told them that the Speaker was coming out and that he was going to take away their lunches, that the Speaker of the House was against them, he was going to take away the school lunch for all of the kids across the country and scared those little kids to death.

Now, that is wrong; that is wrong. The fact of the matter is we are going to increase school lunch funding by 4 percent, we are going to increase it. What we are going to cut is the bureaucracy. We are going to send it to the States in block grants, so that the Governors who understand their States and the mayors who understand their cities can distribute this money properly so that it goes to the intended purpose without a lot of bureaucratic expense.

And I really want to say to my colleagues on the Democrat side, if you criticize us for the school lunch program, criticize your colleagues for going out and scaring those little kids last week. That is wrong.

ATTORNEY ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 1995

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 104 and rule XXIII the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on

the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 988.

□ 1159

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 988) to reform the Federal civil justice system, with Mr. HOBSON in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Monday, March 6, 1995, the amendment offered by the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HOKE] had been disposed of and the bill was open to amendment at any point.

Two and one-half hours remain for consideration of amendments under the 5-minute rule.

Are there further amendments to the bill?

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. BURTON OF INDIANA

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. BURTON of Indiana: In section 2, page 4, line 1, insert at the beginning of the line "25 percent of".

And on line 5, strike the period, insert a comma and add the following new language "or the Court may increase the percentage above the 25 percent if in the opinion of the Court the offeree was not reasonable in rejecting the last offer."

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Chairman, I believe that if there is a frivolous lawsuit filed there ought to be a penalty assessed on the plaintiff. I believe that should be the case. I do not believe, however, it should be a 100 percent losers paying totally, and the reason I say that is because I have known a number of people who have been involved in litigations of this type who have had a legitimate lawsuit, and because of the jury or because of the judge or for whatever reason the ruling was against them, and they were not in a position to be able to pay exorbitant legal fees on the part of the defendant.

Many times these defendants are lawyers for large corporations who can drag these suits on for long periods of time and spend an awful lot of money. Look at some of the trials like you see on TV right now like the O.J. Simpson trial, you see how much time and effort and money is being spent on legal defense.

Some of these people are very proficient at what they do. Can you imagine, we are not talking about a murder trial now, but can you imagine a person in a civil case that is suing somebody and they have the ability to hire the kind of legal counsel you see in the O.J. Simpson case where millions of dollars might be spent in defending someone?

So I believe that there ought to be some middle ground. And that middle ground is exhibited in my amendment, and my amendment says that if the plaintiff loses the case, there is a 25-percent penalty. But if it is a frivolous