Sam, who will order your lunch for a cut of the money, or, B, choose your own lunch, or, C, skip lunch and stay hungry?

We have a program that chooses A, give your money to Uncle Sam, who will order your lunch for a cut of the money. President Clinton and his Congressional allies would have you believe that any change in the current system would mean choice C, that kids would go hungry.

Nothing could be further from the truth. My colleagues and I believe we should choose B, to give block grants to the States and allow decisions to be made closer to our children, which empowers families and our local communities.

We are growing kids, not the Government. Our plan will increase funding for Women, Infants and Children programs and school nutrition programs by 4.5% each year. As you see from this chart in each year from 1995 to the year 2000, the red chart shows a yearly increase of the food programs for school nutrition of 4.5 percent and an even larger increase for WIC programs.

The GOP growth in school meals is very clear, the huge increase. You see the increases, 3.6 percent, 4.5 percent, and 4.5 percent. The same is true with WIC programs. I wish to point that out. The GOP also grows the WIC programs. In this case we see that a line goes up, the CBO baseline WIC funding and the GOP WIC funding, which is even higher.

By eliminating the Federal middleman and the 15-percent administrative costs that were used to run the current program, our plan will make more resources available to feed more children.

Our proposal creates two separate block grants—one to address family nutrition needs and one to address school nutrition needs, which preserves the family and rewards work.

The family nutrition block grant will allow States to promote the good nutrition, health and development of women, infants and children and to provide healthy meals in child care, head start, summer camp, and homeless shelters.

Under the block grant, funding for family programs, including vital programs to help women, infants, and children, will be $588 million greater over the next 5 years than in the current programs. With increased funding and less bureaucracy and paperwork, States can assist more of our children.

The school nutrition block grant allows our schools to provide breakfast, lunch, before and after school meals and low-cost milk to our children. We know that hungry children cannot learn—that is why we propose to increase funding for school meals 4.5 percent each year for 5 years. We are sensitive to the needs of our children. We are committed to providing healthy meals and thus creating a proper learning environment.

Furthermore, the school nutrition block grant will enable more meals to be served to more children.

We are proud to be part of a caring solution that helps our children grown, not our Government bureaucracy.

SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, last week President Clinton visited Patrick Henry Elementary School in Alexandria, VA, to have a bite to eat. He dined on federally subsidized beef tacos and coleslaw and corn and fruit. The point of his visit was to try to convince the American people that the Personal Responsibility Act would slash the money that funds the current school lunch programs. Frankly, that is a lot of suckatash.

The President and those who oppose welfare reform are not telling the truth to the American people. The Personal Responsibility Act would direct that money to go where it is most needed, away from the Washington bureaucrats and toward low income children. The idea is to help those who have the greatest need.

I apologize for injecting real facts into this otherwise lively debate, but let us look at the numbers. In 1994, the Federal appropriation for the school lunch program was $4.3 billion. The Personal Responsibility Act would allocate block grants to the States of $6.7 billion next year, rising to $7.8 billion in the year 2000.

So funding for school lunch programs will increase by 4.5 percent each year over the next 5 years. Let me repeat that again. School lunch programs will increase by 4.5 percent each year. Now, people can argue about whether that is good or bad public policy, but, please, do not mislead the public by calling it a cut.

There has never been a time during this debate when those of us who favor welfare reform have voted for decreasing spending for school lunch programs. Our intent is to better serve children, not the Washington bureaucrats.

How does this bill work? We will transfer power away from the Federal food bureaucrats in Washington and give more authority to the States where it belongs. At the same time, we will focus the program more efficiently to ensure that at least 80 percent of the money goes to children from low income families.

States will have the flexibility to use the grant funds to support what they find to be the best programs for their individual school districts. They can decide how to meet the needs of children and families in their areas. This plan makes school nutrition programs easier to operate and more cost-effective by reducing paperwork. It caps administrative costs at 2 percent, and it helps ensure that meals are appealing to children by allowing greater choice at the regional and local level. We are not cutting funds for our children; we are eliminating the Federal bureaucrat as the middleman.

Federally funded beef tacos may be what we have become accustomed to, but the diet we have become accustomed to here in Washington is not necessarily healthy for the American people. The States should have the opportunity to see if they can feed more children more efficiently with more money. That is what we propose to do.

Frankly, as a parent myself, it makes a lot more sense to me for someone to be able to talk directly with his or her local school board about school lunches than it does to have to speak to the Agriculture Department or Committee on Agriculture here in Washington. It is not as through Federal overmanagement makes beef tacos, coleslaw, corn and fruit taste better.

I hope that those who are so wedded to the present system finally will begin to tell the truth to the American people. The debate becomes clearer when it is understood all the distortions and false accusations are coming from people who understand that we are not proposing state school lunch cuts, but they want to avoid the real cuts other unrelated programs later on.

But opponents want to preserve the country's huge welfare state, so they launch this fear attack now as a preemptive strike. Well, my view is while we need nutritious lunches in our schools, we need a whole lot less baloney here in Washington.

□ 1915

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.]

REFORMING THE WELFARE SYSTEM AND FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

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

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, one of my favorite Presidents was Ronald Reagan, and two of my favorite expressions that he used, and some Members will remember in some of the debates, he would use the phrase, ''Well, there you go again.''

He used that expression when people would attempt to distort the facts. We have heard it again tonight. ''Well, there you go again.''

One of my other favorite expressions from President Reagan was one that I use often around my office, and, that is, ''Facts are stubborn things.'' I almost wish we could bring those charts

back here so people could continue to look at them because I think facts are stubborn things, and I think the more the American people get a chance to see the real facts about what we are talking about relative to welfare reform and reform of our nutrition programs, the more that they will see that the facts are on our side and that this is not a plan designed to cut the nutrition program. As a matter of fact, some of my more conservative constituents back in the district are saying, ''Why are you allowing these programs to grow the way you are? We'd like to see you freeze these programs.''

We are being accused by some of our Democratic colleagues of being mean-spirited and we are hurting children. But I was reminded of a quote the other day from Ralph Waldo Emerson. He said, ''There is always a certain meanness in the argument of conservatism, joined with a certain superiority in its facts.''

As we show the facts and as the American people get to know the facts, I think they will recognize that when we are talking about meanness and particularly as it relates to our children, I think the meanest thing we can do to our kids is leave them a debt which they will not be able to pay off. That is exactly what we are doing, ladies and gentleman.

Last year the President's own budget officers backed up by the General Accounting Office said that unless we make some changes, by the time today's kids reach our age, they may be confronted with an 82-percent tax rate. In fact, we are stealing from their future. I think the American people are way out in front of us. I think they expect some real cuts. As a matter of fact, all of my town meetings have centered around cut spending first. Frankly, I think some of my constituents are upset because we have taken so many things off the table. As I said earlier, I think they want real cuts in welfare, they want real cuts in some of these programs, and in fact as you look at the charts, whether you are looking at welfare, the Nutrition Program, the WIC Program, all of the other programs, we are actually seeing significant increases.

We have only been here about 9 weeks but it is interesting to me to learn the vocabulary of Washington. Here an increase can be called a cut. But we look at the numbers, and the numbers speak for themselves.

If we look at the Family Nutrition Block Grant Program. According to the current programs, we would be spending in fiscal year 1996 $3.585 billion this year. Fiscal year 1996. Under the Republican plan, we are going to spend for the Family Nutrition Block Grant Programs $3.684 billion. That is not a cut. The American people know that is not a cut, and I think the American people want cuts.

I want to close, Mr. Speaker, if I could with a quote, and I will not tell who said this because I think it is such an important message, but I would like to share this with the body:

> The government has extremely limited resources to address the many and urgent needs of our people. We are very keen that this real situation should be communicated to the people as a whole. All of us, especially the leadership of political organizations in civil society, must rid ourselves of the wrong notion that government has a big bag full of money. The government does not have such riches.

The speaker went on to say:

> It is important that we rid ourselves of the culture of entitlement which leads to the expectation that the government must promptly deliver whatever it is that we demand and results in some people refusing to meet their obligations.

That was not NEWT GINGRICH who said that, it was not even Thomas Jefferson who said that. That was said less than a month ago by Nelson Mandela, addressing some people in the Democratic Parliament in Cape Town, South Africa.

Let me just repeat that last sentence because I think it is so important and I think that is what this debate is all about. Are we willing to finally ride ourselves of this entitlement attitude that we have?

He said:

> It is important that we ride ourselves of the culture of entitlement which leads to the expectation that the government must promptly deliver whatever it is we demand and result in some people refusing to meet their obligations.

Mr. Speaker, this exercise that we are going through, whether we are talking about the nutrition programs or welfare reform, is really about changing the attitude not only of Washington but of the American people. We cannot go on under this principle that people are not responsible for themselves. Our welfare reform is really about reinforcing some of those principles, some of those values, if you will, that we know work. We need to reemphasize work, we need to reemphasize personal responsibility. That is what this exercise is about. The facts, the numbers are on our side. Frankly I think, Mr. Speaker, the American people are on our side.

FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, the Republicans say that really they are not cutting nutrition programs, and I do not intend to suggest that they mean to cut and suggest they are not cutting.

We are probably looking at this in different ways. I would think that the emphasis ought to be placed on will they serve more children in the long run or will they serve less? Is the current policy being enforced or will they indeed have a new policy which may yield more money but serve less people?

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, that wedding oneself to entitlement certainly is not wedding oneself to invest in our future. Wedding oneself to entitlement is not the same as saying children are our most precious commodity. And entitlements as to some of the basic necessities as food and shelter and health seems to be consistent with what democracy is all about, not necessarily wedding them to be on the dole. I would argue for consistency in terms of America and reaching out to help those least among us as reaching out to help those who are most affluent. It was indeed President Kennedy who said, and I agree, that if this Nation cannot respond to the many who are poor, certainly this Nation cannot defend the few who are rich. That is true, Mr. Speaker.

What are those myths they are saying? They are saying, well, there is going to be more food indeed for school lunches.

I would submit, indeed they are cutting. In fact, the chart we have here indicates surely that they are cutting as a whole.

They say indeed that what we are doing, we are increasing the School Lunch Program 4.5 percent. Indeed, that may be so, but consider this, Mr. Speaker. In that 4.5 percent, you are not taking into consideration inflation, you are not taking into consideration the increase of students who will be there, but yet that same approach was not led to the defense. Indeed, you did take into consideration when you were looking at the budget for defense that in order to maintain that level of service, we have to make an adjustment for inflation. But indeed you did not do that.

When you take all of the nutrition programs together, this chart clearly shows that over that 5-year period, there would be cuts of at least $7 billion. You see, when you take all the many nutrition programs together and begin to block grant them into two, something else happens to that, particularly the ones that you have the nutrition where you have WIC and other programs. You begin to have the programs who are in need competing among themselves. How does that affect the American people?

I will tell you, it certainly affects the day care people and those who are working because they are going to find that their day care is going to go up and beyond, to make work affordable, they are going to have to increase their outlay for day care because now the choices will be how much money we spend on WIC, how much money we spend on day care.

You say, well, 80 percent of those funds are designed for WIC. Well, WIC does not want to help people get over the first 2 or 3 years and find that the mother is now working and all of a sudden her day care is going up because you are pulling away the support that you had there before day care.