going to be cut off the rolls in Maryland.

SCHOOL-BASED NUTRITION PROGRAMS

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

Mr. GREENWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I had not intended to participate in this evening's special orders, but I was sitting in my office answering mail and became a little vexed about the discussion and decided I needed to come over and maybe engage someone on that side in some discussion, on the same subject of child nutrition programs.

I am a member of the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities that worked very carefully to try to craft this bill, particularly as it relates to the school-based nutrition programs.

It angers me to hear over and over again the use of the term ''cut'' for these programs. It is not fair. It is not accurate. And if we want to elevate this argument to a place maybe we could find some agreement, we have to start agreeing on what is indisputable.

What is indisputable is that we are not proposing a cut of one penny in the school lunch program, not a penny. In fact, we are proposing an increase that far exceeds, frankly, what your side of the aisle did when you had all of the tools available to you to set the budget.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. If the gentleman would yield.

Mr. GREENWOOD. I will be happy to yield.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. GREENWOOD, like you, I was waiting for my turn, and I also serve on the committee with you. And let us talk about that ''not cut'' a minute because we served on that committee, and we tried to take away, and there was an amendment in committee to eliminate the block granting of the school nutrition.

And it was generally a party line vote, as I recall, to take away the school lunch in this process and say, okay, let us do welfare reform without touching school lunches. And it was defeated on a party line. So the Republican majority in our committee said school lunch is a part of the welfare reform bill.

You say you have an increase, but let me talk about and ask you about if this is correct.

Mr. GREENWOOD. Let me reclaim my time for a moment to state my case, and then I will be happy to engage you in further discussion.

Last year when the Democrats controlled the House and the Senate and the White House, what you did in your budget was increase the school lunch program by 3.1 percent. We are proposing 4.5 percent for 5 years, which is about 50 percent better for the kids that we are doing in our proposal than you ever did.

The President in this year's budget proposal, the President of the United States, the one who went to visit the school children in Maryland for lunch, he proposed a 3.6 percent increase this year. And we proposed 4.5 percent.

Now I want to know who has the gall to call the difference between the President's 3.6 percent and our 4.5 percent a cut.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. If you would yield again to me.

Mr. GREENWOOD. I would yield if you would respond to my question.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. The difference between the President is 3.1.

I will give you an example. In the State of Texas, we are actually growing 8 percent instead of 4.5.

Mr. GREENWOOD. Reclaiming my time.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. I will let you reclaim your time since Mr. HOKE wouldn't let some Members reclaim their time.

Mr. GREENWOOD. I will be happy to have anyone respond to me if they will indeed respond to me.

The issue is this. I have heard Members from your side of the aisle all night tonight talk about a cut in the child nutrition program, particularly the school lunch program. I just want to know how you square that with these facts.

When you ran the show here, you did 3.1 percent more in the current fiscal year for school lunch programs. The President of the United States proposes 3.6 percent, and we offer 4.5 percent for 5 years. I want to know what you have to complain about compared to what you did when you were in control and what the President proposes.

Ms. PELOSI. The difference, my colleague, and thank you for yielding, is that we are talking about a block grant versus an entitlement. When you are talking about a block grant you are talking about a limitation on the number of children and the kind of nutrition they would get.

Mr. GREENWOOD. Let us talk in those terms.

Ms. PELOSI. That is an important point because when you are talking about an entitlement, then the money will be there for the children.

You are talking about a block grant that has several shortcomings. First of all, it is a limitation on the amount of money that will be spent regardless of the growth and need for children who are hungry.

Second of all, your block grant requires that the Governors only spend 80 percent of that money on the school lunch program.

Third of all, your block grant removes the nutritional requirements so what the children are getting does not relate to what the children may need nutritionally. So you can spread it out among more kids so that they meet certain criteria for the block grant, but it may not be more kids who need the school lunch. Therefore, the nutrition that the really needy kids are getting is good.

Fourth of all, you are talking about the school-based lunch program, and you are cutting out the summer program and the afternoon program and the child care program.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. GREENWOOD. Mr. Speaker, may I request a point of order? Am I able to request two more minutes?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair is unable to entertain that request during the 5-minute special orders.

CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

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

Mr. GREENWOOD. Since I yielded half of my time last time, would the gentleman yield me 30 seconds?

Mr. BECERRA. I would be more than willing to yield if I have some time at the end of my remarks, and I probably will have. If I do, I would be more than happy to yield.

I think the gentleman from Illinois a while back stated it best, Mr. DURBIN, when he said folks probably watching this do not understand what is going on. Is there a cut? Is there not a cut? Are the Republicans providing less? The answer is yes.

I visited some elementary schools and high schools recently, and I was talking to those that do provide school lunch programs, and the principals will tell you the price of food is going up. The number of kids in schools is growing.

When you tell that principal that today the dollar that that principal has to provide a school lunch to a child is the same dollar or just a slight bit more than the principal will have to feed that same child or the child's younger brother or sister coming up, that principal will tell you, ''If the school population has grown and inflation is cut into the value of my dollar, there is no way that I as a principal will be able to feed the number of students that need free or subsidized school lunches.''

Let us not make any mistake about that. The Republican proposal cuts the amount of moneys that would be available for child nutrition programs in this Nation. It cuts them because it does not square the fact that we have inflation in this country and we have growing student populations. If they kept pace, then we would be okay.

And the problem that a number of us have as Democrats is that the current law says that whether or not we in Congress play political games with the moneys for our school kids, it makes no difference because the law protects

children. The law preserves that opportunity for the child to be able to pay a subsidized price for that school lunch or, if the child is very poor, then to get the lunch free because the law provides that right now.

But under the new Republican proposal, not only would there not be a keeping of the pace with inflation and the growth of school population but at the same time the Republican bill guts that protection for children under the law that says you will get fed. Because we understand and have recognized under the law that it is important to make sure that you have the nutrition you need to be able to learn.

The Republican bill says, no, you will get fed if the Committee on Appropriations in the House and if the Committee on Appropriations in the Senate agrees that they will fund certain levels.

So when the Republicans talk about their funding levels of 4.5 percent increases, they are speculating because they haven't provided those moneys. Those aren't there, and they will not be there until the appropriating committees in each House each year decides that they will allocate the moneys.

Let me tell you, I have very little faith that future Congresses will allocate the moneys that are authorized to be spent.

Why do I say that? Well, last week we just finished, and I voted against this, proposing and adopting a bill that cut moneys. Where did it cut? Well, it did not do much to defense. It did not do anything to programs that are out there to subsidize the wealthy.

What it did do was it cut from students, from the elderly, from veterans. And if I look at how they were able to make cuts in those programs, I have very little faith that a program like school nutrition, which will no longer be protected under the law, will be protected from cuts in the future, especially if anyone in this Congress is serious about trying to balance the budget.

So whether we want to say we are providing more money or not, the reality is that under current law our kids are protected from the shenanigans and politics of Members of Congress under the Republican proposal that is gone, and we have to hope that not only will they provide the money they say but they will see the light and provide the actual dollars needed for that principal to provide not just the same meal but provide it to the growing number of kids in the school.

What does all this do to a place like Los Angeles, CA, a place that I represent? Well, if in fact we are going to lose the $2.3 billion over the next 5 years that the Republican bill will cost us, which is about a 6 percent cut, then I know in Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Unified School District, which is the second largest school district in the Nation with something over 600 and some odd thousand students in it, close to 550,000 of those children who receive subsidized or free lunches will not be able to eat, will not be able to eat the same amount, or will be told to wait until tomorrow.

That is a lot of meals. That is a lot of kids. I think we have to start doing something differently.

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MORE ON WELFARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. JONES] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GREENWOOD].

Mr. GREENWOOD. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman very much for yielding to me. I simply asked for the time so I could respond to the comments of my very good friend, the gentlewoman from California, because frankly, she brought the debate back to where I think it should be and that is a fair debate.

The previous speaker raised legitimate issues about the difference between an entitlement program and a block grant. That is the level of the discussion that we ought to have. If we have that level of discussion, then we can talk about different strategies to balance the budget.

I came over here fairly upset because I am so angered to hear over and over again the use of the term ''cutting'' the funding for this program. It simply is not true. It really should not be said.

The level of debate will be elevated tremendously if we talk about different strategies, whether it is entitlements or block grants. We can do that. We can have honest differences of opinion. We might actually learn from each other and find some common ground.

I really would encourage my friends on the other side of the aisle to stop using the terminology of cutting funding for this program, when in fact the facts are, and I will repeat them, when the Democrats controlled the House and the Senate and the White House, they provided this program with a 3.1 percent increase and the president, in this year's budget, proposed 3.6 percent, and we have offered 4.5 percent for the next 5 years.

If the appropriators do not do that, that is a discussion for another day. And perhaps we will join some of you in voting against an appropriations bill that does not live up to the 4.5 percent authorization. But let us be honest about where we are in the process.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentlewoman from California [Ms. PELOSI].

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of debate, I would like to respond to the gentleman's comments. What we have to do, if we are going to debate this in a way that is clear to the American people, is to define our terms. The gentleman from Ohio was waving the CRS report before and saying how much of an increase that the Republican proposal was of the school-based lunch plan versus, as you are referencing, President Clinton's increase on an entitlement program as opposed to a block grant.

The point I want to make is that what the gentleman was waving was already a cut, yes, a cut, because it is only referring to the school-based lunch program. It does not provide funding for the afternoon program or the summer school program. So you have already cut children's nutrition plans.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the debate on both sides as it relates to the nutrition program. I wanted to touch on welfare and the need for welfare, but first I have to make these comments as a former Democrat, that today I was interviewed by the Washington Post wanting to know why in the State of North Carolina that we went from 8 Democratic Congressmen, four Republicans to four Republican Congressmen and four—excuse me, eight Republican Congressmen and four Democrats. The whole purpose is simply because the new minority party was out of touch with the middle-class working American.

People in America are paying, the working family will spend half of what it makes on paying taxes and actually spend more on paying taxes than it will spend on clothing, housing and food. And this debate tonight about children is extremely important, and on our side we believe we are doing what is right for children.

I can tell the other side, after hearing the debate today and yesterday, that the American people are ready for downsizing Government. They are ready to see efficiency in programs. They are ready to see less taxes coming out of their paycheck. That is what I think the Republican party has done.

Let me talk just briefly, I know my time is short, about the facts on welfare. Since the 1960s, Washington has spent approximately $5 trillion of taxpayers' money on the war on poverty. It is the most expensive war our Nation has ever waged, and it is a war we have lost. The amount we spend in a year on welfare is roughly three times the amount needed to raise the incomes of all poor Americans above the poverty income threshold. Nearly 65 percent of the people on welfare at any given time would be in the welfare system for 8 years or longer.

A record 14.3 million people now receive welfare benefits, a 31 percent increase since 1989. Funding for welfare programs is estimated to increase from $325 billion in 1993 to $500 billion in 1998.

My colleagues, the people of America are demanding welfare reform. We can debate as we should debate, being a democracy, but when we really come down to it, the working people of America are tired and fed up of seeing