

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I would like to wrap up our focus, our effort this morning.

Let me just say, again, that I congratulate the House on what they have done. I think they moved forward. I think they have examined and have come up with new ideas. Do I support all of it? Probably not. Is it a perfect bill? Of course not. But it gives us an opportunity to take a new look at something that needs a new look.

What we are seeking is the best way to deliver services, the best way to help people help themselves, to find a way to help people who need help back into the workplace. That is what it is all about. That is the purpose of this program.

I went into our welfare office in Casper, WY. I expected to find a staff that was very defensive when we talked about change. That is not true. They felt frustrated with the program that they now have to administer. The director showed me this whole shelf full of regulations. He said, "God, I spend half my time working on regulations." They come from different Departments. They come from Agriculture, they come from Housing, they come from the welfare program. We need to put them together so that they do work.

We try to do something to encourage people to work, and if a mother on AFDC does not have a job or does not look for one or does not do what is required, they seek to reduce the payments. They reduce the payments here and they go up in food stamps, they go up in housing. They are very frustrated that they are not being able to accomplish what they want to accomplish.

There is a perception that more Government is needed by some, that more money is needed. Since the war on poverty, the Federal Government has spent nearly \$5 trillion on social welfare programs. Federal, State and local governments combined now spend \$350 billion a year, 20 percent more than the Government spends on national defense.

Separate Medicaid from food stamps and aid to families with dependent children and you find a program that costs taxpayers approximately \$90 billion a year, more than five times what it was in 1981.

Specifically, the Federal share for Medicaid spending in the State of Wyoming has grown from \$42 million to over \$107 million from 1990 to 1994. The State's share for that program has grown from \$24 to \$61 million in that same period of time. And we all know what the results have been.

We have heard a great deal of criticism from the administration regarding the Republicans' efforts to reform welfare. On the other hand, that is what the President talked about when he came here. He said, "We're going to change welfare as we know it." Unfortunately, we have not heard much lately from the administration. The proposal introduced by the President in

1994 exempted all welfare mothers born before 1972 and proposed \$9.3 billion in additional spending. Exempting 80 percent of the current caseload is not an answer, nor is the infusion of more money without change.

So what we are talking about is a great opportunity to provide real help, to provide a system that delivers the help to the people who need the help, not take it off on the way there.

I hope that we can start, as we said in the beginning, with a stipulation that everyone in this place is compassionate about children, everyone in this place wants to find a system that works and that we do not polarize ourselves by saying, "These folks want to throw everybody out; these folks want to help everybody." That is not the case.

Like the Senator from Pennsylvania, I call on the media to help, to help really say what the facts are, to really lay out that cuts are not cuts, reductions in spending proposals are not cuts, that consolidation of programs can end up with more benefit to recipients, and that is where we are.

Mr. President, we appreciate this opportunity in the morning time, and we look forward to participating in developing a program of assistance to Americans that will bring them out of poverty and into the workplace.

I yield the floor.

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, last Saturday the people of Greece celebrated 172 years of Greek independence from the Ottoman Empire. The Greek emancipation from the reins of tyranny brings to mind our own ancestors' struggle for freedom. Greece and the United States share a common struggle rooted in a common philosophy of liberty and self-governance put forth by the ancient Greeks.

Thomas Jefferson looked to the ancient Greeks when he made the case for representative democracy. Jefferson once said, " * * * to the ancient Greeks * * * we are all indebted for the light which led ourselves out of Gothic darkness." The Declaration of Independence closely mirrors the ideals of ancient Greek philosophers. Greek Independence Day not only commemorates Greece's victory over oppression, but also celebrates deeply rooted philosophical symmetry—one honed by great statesmen from Aristotle to Thomas Jefferson.

America's relationship with the Greeks came full circle when, on the eve of their revolution for independence, the Greek commander in chief, Petros Mavomichalis implored Americans for assistance:

Having formed the resolution to live or die for freedom, we are drawn toward you by a just sympathy since it is in your land that liberty has fixed her abode, and by you that she is prized as by our fathers. Hence, honoring her name, we invoke yours at the same time, trusting that in imitating you, we

shall imitate our ancestors and be thought worthy of them if we succeed in resembling you . . . it is for you, citizens of America, to crown this glory.

Cognizant of the familiar ideals upon which the United States was founded, Greeks emigrated to the United States en masse during the early 1900's. Thus, generations of Greek-Americans have been able to contribute to the reaffirmation of their ancestors' political philosophies.

Greek immigrants emulated their ancestors' drive for knowledge. By 1970, Greek-Americans already topped other ethnic groups in median educational achievement. Combined with this intellectual drive, Greeks brought with them a diligent work ethic. Greek Independence Day also gives us an opportunity to pay special tribute to the industrious traditions of Greek-Americans and their outstanding contribution to our society.

I take this opportunity to wish all Greeks, whether they be in Greece or my home State of South Dakota, the very best during this 172d year of Greek independence.

TRIBUTE TO JENNIE BLAIR

Mr. HEFLIN. Mr. President, the Democratic Party of Alabama lost one of its most ardent supporters and activists on March 12, when Madison County Chairwoman Jennie Blair passed away. She was a strong, dedicated woman who contributed greatly to her State and community over the years.

Jennie was a very eloquent spokesperson for the causes and programs that help the people who are least able to help themselves. She was a positive force for good. Activists on the other side felt a kindred spirit with her, and also felt the loss.

She was a retired South Central Bell employee and labor activist who had long been involved in local Democratic Party politics. Just last month, Jennie was elected to a 4-year term as Madison County chairwoman. Huntsville, Alabama's third-largest city, is located in Madison.

A native of Lincoln County, TN, she was a member of the Communications Workers of America and a delegate to the Democratic National Convention. She held many other leadership positions in the State and national party, and played a pivotal role in the 1992 convention.

Jennie Blair's determination, energy, enthusiasm, and drive will be sorely missed by those who knew and worked with and against her. She took her politics seriously, and truly believed in the principles of the Democratic Party. She believed that Government can be a positive force in people's lives and was never shy about expressing that view. She was a dynamic example of the best things about politics and public service.