My first concern lies in the area of child protection. The legislation significantly reduces the funds available for recruiting and licensing foster homes, monitoring children in foster care and other alternative placements, completing the court processes needed to free children for adoption, training and recruiting child protection caseworkers, and other activities necessary to maintain an adequate program for abused and neglected children. The cap on child protection funds will put further strain on our already overburdened child protection system and could seriously inhibit states' ability to respond when a child is abused or neglected.

I am also concerned about whether the funds available for child care assistance are adequate to meet the needs of families as they move off welfare and into work. The availability of safe, affordable child care is essential to successful welfare reform. At the same time, we need to ensure that low income working families have access to child care assistance.

My third concern is about the extent of the changes in the Supplemental Security Income [SSI] program. The legislation will eliminate SSI eligibility for an estimated 21 percent of the children currently receiving benefits and reduce benefits for about 75 percent of the remaining children. While the creation of a two-tiered benefit system distinguishes between the most disabled children who require a higher level of services and those who are moderately and mildly disabled, the legislation places an overwhelming emphasis on physical disabilities. I believe the criteria used to differentiate between those receiving full benefits and those receiving reduced benefits should be reexamined.

I am relieved that the effective date for the cash assistance provisions in the bill has been changed to the 1996 fiscal year. This should give States adequate time to make the legislative and administrative changes needed to adjust to the block grant. Successful welfare reform will require careful consideration and planning, and States must be provided the opportunity for a thoughtful, deliberative process regarding how they want to proceed.

I believe that these concerns can be effectively addressed. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act is a bold move to change the way in which government responds to people in need of assistance—a move that needs to be taken.

LONGEST TERM RECORD

Mrs. KASSEBAUM. Mr. President, I would just like to acknowledge that today breaks the record for the longest term ever held by a Republican leader of the Senate. Senator DOLE, as the majority leader, has broken the record that is more than just showing up every day. Perhaps Senator DOLE is the Cal Ripken of the Senate. But I would just like to express the appreciation of all of us for the dedicated leadership he has brought, the thoughtfulness and patience that it takes, and as a matter of fact his sheer grit.

I yield the floor.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, two records in 2 days. What do you say we give him a hand.

[Applause, Senators rising.]

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND WORK ACT OF 1995—CONFERENCE REPORT

The Senate continued with the consideration of the conference report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I yield to my gallant friend from Massachusetts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KERRY. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, this is a profound and important debate about welfare reform that tests our resolve to change a system that is in need of change, but it is a debate which also tests our commitment to community to the sick and the hurting—to the elderly and the thousands of people who are looking for a helping hand from a government that will help them help themselves

Every Senator here today knows the importance of helping families get back to work—get on the job and off the dole; but they also know the devastation of poverty—the lack of hope and the despair and frustrations that all of use see in our States.

Unfortunately the bill which we passed to reform welfare has turned for the worse in conference and threatens to injure children and people with disabilities.

Mr. President, this conference bill will increase poverty—not decrease it. It will increase despair and destroy hope among some of the poorest, sickest, and weakest Americans.

I cannot in good conscience—and I will not—vote for such an ill advised retreat from real reform—no matter how well intended it may be—no matter how deeply some or the other side of the aisle might feel about it.

This bill eats away at the strength of America because the strength of America is not found in its willingness to separate the rich from the poor.

No, the strength of America, as Hubert Humphrey said:

> Lies with its people. Not people on the dole but on the job. Not people in despair but people filled with hope. Not people without education but people with skill and knowledge. Not people turned away but people welcomed by their neighbors as full and equal partners in our American adventure.

This is our strength, but this bill we are asked to vote on today does not play to that strength.

Mr. President, we all want to move people from welfare to work. But the conference report reduces the ability to put people back to work.

This conference bill is wrong because it's too harsh and it will injure children and families in significant ways.

It reduces SSI benefits for a large majority of disabled children by 25 percent. These are kids, Mr. President, with cerebral palsy, kids with Down's syndrome, muscular dystrophy, cystic fibrosis and AIDS.

I'm told that by the year 2002, some 650,000 low income children would be affected by this cut. In real numbers that means that the benefits to seriously disabled children would be cut from 74 percent of the poverty line to 55 percent of the poverty line; and with all due respect to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that cut was not in the Senate bill.

The current law ensures that AFDC families receive Medicare coverage. Under this bill that provision of the law would be repealed, leaving 1.5 million children at risk—and at least 4 million mothers would lose health coverage.

This conference bill undermines the school lunch program. It denies school lunches to certain categories of immigrant school children, including legal immigrants, and it would create an entire bureaucracy to determine the status of the children.

It would deny SSI and food stamps to immigrants who are legal permanent residents of the United States.

The bill includes $32 billion in food stamp benefit cuts to the elderly and working poor—which means about a 20-percent cut to those families who are already working, who are struggling to make ends meet on a minimum wage job or with a Social Security check struggling to pay for basics to keep them from losing their apartments and ending up homeless and on the street.

When fully in effect the food stamp cuts will lower the average benefit level from 78 cents per person per meal to 62 cents—62 cents a meal.

Mr. President, what are we doing? Is this the kind of nation we have become?

The whole point of welfare reform was to identify the people who are on welfare but who are capable of working, and getting them off welfare and into jobs.

This conference bill does not accomplish that goal in the way we did in the Senate passed bill.

This bill hurts children, the sick and the elderly.

It hurts dependent children, more than half of whom live below the poverty line. It hurts disabled children, sick children, hungry children, children without a chance and often without a prayer for survival.

It hurts disabled elderly people, who deserve more in their old age, who seek only a little dignity and a little respect.

This bill raises the age at which impoverished elderly people could qualify for SSI, from 65 to 67 or even higher—and who does this affect? It is aimed

primarily at poor elderly women—widows with limited work experience outside the home. These poor women, already on the edge, would have the principal component of their small safety net ripped away. They could lose their Medicaid. And many of them will be forced into severe poverty and bouts of homelessness.

Does this sound like welfare reform? Is this what the American people had in mind when they think of welfare reform?

In other words, Mr. President, this bill goes for the easy targets. It hurts the people who can't fight back. In the end it hurts America.

There is not enough in this bill about helping people find work, but there are plenty of sweeping cuts to impress constituents with hollow, vicious attacks on people that anyone can attack.

This bill raises the suffering level and lowers the promise of hope and of jobs.

The bill simply does not provide adequate resources for work programs.

According to CBO estimates, funding will fall $5.5 billion short of what is needed to fund the work program in 2002 alone, and that's assuming that the States maintain their safety net for poor children.

Over a 7-year period, funding for the work program will fall about $14 billion short of what is needed.

Is this a job program?

The original Contract With America recognized this problem and provided $10 billion for work programs—but that money is not in this bill.

Mr. President, I am voting against this legislation because it steps back from important safeguards that were contained in the Senate bill—safeguards for children, for elderly, for work—that are the true heart of welfare reform.

Mr. President, I voted for the bill that left the Senate. I will not vote for this conference report today. And I will not vote for it because there are some dramatic differences between this conference report and what we voted for. Most importantly, this conference report takes away a fundamental guarantee in this country that children will have health care.

It takes away a fundamental guarantee about standards in this country with respect to health and safety for child care.

In addition to that, it reduces the most important lifeline that we guaranteed in the Senate bill, that those who are required to go to work who have children will be able to find the proper care for their children. And that has been reduced in this bill. In addition to that, it takes away the personal responsibility contract and it reduces the child nutrition program.

This bill will hurt children, and for that reason, Mr. President, as a conference bill I cannot vote for it. I hope we will return to the Senate with a more appropriate conference at some point in the future.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Who yields time?

Mr. MOYNIHAN. I thank my friend from Massachusetts. It is truly hard to conceive that we might be for such business 3 days before Christmas.

Mr. President, if the majority leader does not wish to speak at this moment, the Senator from Connecticut will do. I yield 1 minute to my able friend from Connecticut.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair advises the Senator he has 45 seconds remaining.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Connecticut may have 1 minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DODD. I thank my colleague from New York.

Mr. President, let me just address the Senate on the children's issues and the child care issues and try to put this in perspective. As most of my colleagues know, I have spent a lot of time, along with many others, on the issue of child care, and I just want to put it straight. When we passed out the Senate version of this bill on child care, we had provided $8 billion for child care over 5 years. This conference report has $7 billion for child care over 5 years. It is a $1 billion reduction over that 5-year period. And so it is a cut in the child care funds.

But almost as egregious as the cut in the child care funds is the elimination of the health and safety standards, something that we fought very hard on over these years. Now, to eliminate health and safety standards where young children are being cared for, whatever other views you have, you do not do it. You do not take away the basic health and safety standards for child care in this country. So the money is one thing. That is a cut of $1 billion. But to put these children all day long in a situation where they are not safe and they are not healthy, getting the proper kind of care is just wrong-headed and for that reason alone this bill ought to be rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. MOYNIHAN. Mr. President, I yield back the remainder of my time, which does not exist, with a plea that this legislation not be approved.

Mr. DOLE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I think this is a good bill and pretty much like the bill that passed the Senate by a vote of 87 to 12 with 1 absentee.

We have heard many times that the President is going to end welfare as we know it. This is an opportunity the President has. Everybody ought to ask the question—and I know it has been addressed on the other side—does this conference report have the core principles and needed reforms that were in the Senate-passed welfare bill? The answer in my view is yes. We supported that bill in September, the Work Opportunity Act, as I said, by a vote of 87 to 12. We stood behind it in a bipartisan way.

During this time before our vote, I also ask that we once again remember two overriding facts. First, our current welfare system has failed; and, second, it is our duty to fix it.

COMMON SENSE, CORE PRINCIPLES FOR DRAMATIC REFORM

The Senate bill and the conference report both take a commonsense approach. Both bills establish core principles: strong work requirements; strengthening families and requiring personal responsibility; providing protection for children; giving States the flexibility they need to design programs that best meet the needs of the people, and that can best reduce our alarming illegitimacy rate; and assuring States receive necessary Federal support.

Let me take a moment to review the similarities in the commonsense policies in the Senate bill and the conference report.

They both require able-bodied welfare recipients to work for their assistance as soon as the State determines they are ''work ready'' or within 2 years, whichever is earlier.

They both put a 5-year lifetime limit on welfare benefits, so that welfare does not become a way of life.

They both require single teenage parents who have children out of wedlock to stay in school and live under adult supervision in order to receive benefits.

They both provide $75 million to States for abstinence education programs.

They both grant our States the ability to try and reduce America's alarming illegitimacy rate.

They both give States the option of exempting families with a child under age 1 from the work-participation rates.

They both prevent States from sanctioning a single custodial parent for failure to work if the parent shows a demonstrated need for child care.

They both include important provisions on locating and tracking absent parents, establishing paternity and enforcing support orders.

They both give our States the flexibility to devise programs that meet the specific needs of their citizens.

They both provide a $1.7 billion supplemental loan fund. States may borrow from it up to 10 percent of their welfare block grant amount.

They both provide a $1 billion contingency grant fund for States over 7 years.

They both put a cap on spending, because no program with an unlimited budget will ever be made to work effectively and efficiently.

CHILD CARE AND STATE MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT

During the Senate debate and establishment of these policies, two major issues emerged as central to the bipartisan support that emerged: first, access to child care and second, requiring

States to maintain some level of their spending effort.

The child care provisions in the conference report provide $1.8 billion more than current law and $1 billion more than the Senate-passed bill. Specifically, a child care block grant is established that includes $11 billion in mandatory spending for welfare recipients and $7 billion in discretionary spending for low income families. Spending on child care increases from $1.3 billion in fiscal year 1997 to over $2 billion in fiscal year 2002.

In the conference report, States are required to maintain their spending effort for the life of the new cash block grant at 75 percent of what they spent in fiscal year 1994 for the programs that are in this block grant. This seems to represent the objective of the majority of Members in the Senate.

CONFERENCE REPORT MODIFICATIONS

Now let me touch on some of the areas that have been modified since the Senate first passed welfare reform. No doubt about it, there has been much speculation over the savings that will come out of this reform. I can tell you this: The savings realized from the conference report are about the same as those realized from the Senate bill.

The conference report does require States to deny more cash to mothers who have more children while receiving welfare. However States have the flexibility to opt-out. As Senator SANTORUM said last night, this provision asks State legislatures to make a decision.

Let us make no mistake about it, the conference report does establish a child protection block grant that combines mandatory funding for existing child welfare programs while maintaining current law protections. However foster care and adoption maintenance payments remain open entitlement and the enactment of the block grant is delayed to fiscal year 1997. Funding for these programs are $1 billion more than the Senate passed Balanced Budget Act.

NEW PROVISIONS

Let me list a few additions to the Senate-passed bill now in the conference report before us.

The effective date of the new cash welfare block grant is delayed to fiscal year 1997 yet allows States to opt-in during fiscal year 1996.

We have also included a 10-percent reduction in the social services block grant which was proposed by President Clinton. This will provide $1.6 billion in savings over 7 years.

The eligibility for States to receive food stamp block grants is tightened up. States which have implemented electronic benefit transfer statewide will be eligible. States with an error rate of less than 6 percent are also eligible.

The controversy surrounding block grants for child nutrition programs is settled by allowing a pilot project for seven States to participate in an optional block grant program. Authority expires in 2000. Block grants could then be revisited.

GOP GOVERNORS BACK CONFERENCE AGREEMENT

Thirty Republican Governors sent a letter to President Clinton on December 20 urging him to support this conference agreement. They write:

> While each State will have its own reform strategy, this legislation helps to accomplish those goals by setting forth these guidelines:
>
> Families must work for benefits and States that get families working are rewarded.
>
> No family can stay on welfare after 2 years without working.
>
> The total time a family can collect cash benefits is limited to 5 years unless States, because of their own unique circumstances, opt out of this limit.
>
> And States will have the option to pay cash benefits to teen parents, but they must live at home and stay in school to receive those benefits.

I urge my colleagues to support the conference report to H.R. 4. The core principles and policies necessary for dramatic reform contained in it are consistent with the Senate-passed bill and consistent with the needs of Americans.

So, Mr. President, it seems to me we have been able to retain nearly every provision that was in the Senate-passed bill. I know for some of my colleagues, because the President says he is going to veto it, maybe for that reason they feel compelled to support the President. But my view is we have a good bill. We ought to vote for it. We ought to send it to the President, and then try to persuade the President that this is a bill he should sign.

I yield back the balance of my time.

SECURITIES LITIGATION REFORM ACT—VETO

The Senate continued with the reconsideration of the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Shall the bill (H.R. 1058) pass, the objections of the President of the United States to the contrary notwithstanding? The yeas and nays are required under the Constitution. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 68, nays 30, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 612 Leg.]

YEAS—68

Abraham	Dole	Inhofe
Ashcroft	Domenici	Jeffords
Baucus	Exon	Johnston
Bennett	Faircloth	Kassebaum
Bingaman	Feinstein	Kempthorne
Bradley	Ford	Kennedy
Brown	Frist	Kerry
Burns	Gorton	Kohl
Campbell	Gramm	Kyl
Chafee	Grams	Lieberman
Coats	Grassley	Lott
Cochran	Gregg	Lugar
Coverdell	Harkin	Mack
Craig	Hatch	McConnell
D'Amato	Hatfield	Mikulski
DeWine	Helms	Moseley-Braun
Dodd	Hutchison	Murkowski
Murray	Rockefeller	Stevens
Nickles	Roth	Thomas
Pell	Santorum	Thompson
Pressler	Simpson	Thurmond
Reid	Smith	Warner
Robb	Snowe	

NAYS—30

Akaka	Dorgan	Levin
Biden	Feingold	McCain
Boxer	Glenn	Moynihan
Breaux	Graham	Nunn
Bryan	Heflin	Pryor
Bumpers	Hollings	Sarbanes
Byrd	Inouye	Shelby
Cohen	Kerrey	Simon
Conrad	Lautenberg	Specter
Daschle	Leahy	Wellstone

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—1

Bond

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 68, the nays are 30. One Senator responding present. Two-thirds of the Senators voting, a quorum being present, having voted in the affirmative, the bill on reconsideration is passed, the objections of the President of the United States to the contrary notwithstanding.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate for 3 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE MAJORITY L

ted in the affirmative, the bill on reconsideration is passed, the

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, if I may have the attention of the Senators, Dizzy Dean said, ''It is all right to brag if you have done it.''

BOB DOLE has done it! He began his service as leader of the Republican Party in the Senate on January 3, 1985, and the record, up until today, for having held the position of leadership on the Republican side of the aisle was held by the late Charles McNary of Oregon, who was leader 10 years, 11 months, 18 days. Now, BOB DOLE has not been leader as long as Robinson Crusoe was marooned on that island. Crusoe was marooned 28 years, 2 months, and 19 days. But BOB DOLE has been the leader of the Republican Party, as of today, 10 years, 11 months, and 19 days!

Mr. President, I served with BOB DOLE when he was minority leader and I was majority leader. I served with him when he was majority leader and I was minority leader. I always found him to be a man of his word. We had some exchanges from time to time, as leaders will have, but I found him to be an honorable man. I shall always look back upon my service with him, when we were leaders together, with a great deal of pleasure.

I have a fondness for BOB DOLE, and I am glad today to salute him as a great leader of his party. I commend him on his service not only to his party but also to his country, and for his service to the Senate.

May God's richest blessings follow him and his loved ones always.

[Applause, Senators rising.]

Mr. THURMOND addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina [Mr. THURMOND] is recognized.