Clarion University as well as a world champion. He was worked many hours sharpening his skills and practicing his trade, striving to be the very best that this country has to offer. He has shown leadership, as a 3-year captain of his collegiate squad, and displayed the ability to work with teammates toward a larger goal.

Kurt Angle has competed on many levels, in many international tournaments and has always performed to the best of his abilities. That he has finally achieved the gold medal in a competition as important as the Olympic games is a true testament to his courage and character. The community of Mt. Lebanon has long known of Kurt Angle's athletic gifts and now we are happy to share them, and him, with the rest of the world. His strength and determination are qualities that all Americans can look upon and be proud.

I join many in the 18th Congressional District, and across the United States, in congratulating Kurt Angle for this glorious achievement. Thank you, Kurt, for proving that hard work can bring us closer to our dreams.

WELFARE REFORM

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 11, 1996

Mr. HAMILTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert my Washington Report for Wednesday, August 7, 1996 into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

THE WELFARE REFORM BILL

With passage of the welfare reform bill, Congress has made a sweeping change in social policy. It came to pass because of rising public indignation over an open-ended entitlement welfare system. We are ending welfare as we know it, creating a new system without really knowing what its impact will be, but feeling strongly that the present system needs radical change.

I supported this bill because I concluded a long time ago that the current welfare system cries out for reform. Virtually no one defends it. It undermines the basic values of work, responsibility and family, traps generation after generation in dependency, and hurts the very people that it was designed to help. The principal goal of this legislation is to promote work and self-sufficiency and to end dependence.

WHAT THE BILL DOES

For sixty years the welfare system has been driven by the view that if you are poor and eligible you're guaranteed a check. This bill ends that guarantee. As of July 1, 1997, the federal program of welfare—Aid to Families With Dependent Children—will be eliminated. A new program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) will provide block grants which states will use to run their own welfare systems.

Abled-bodied welfare recipients will now be required to work after two years, or lose benefits. By the year 2002, states should have 50% of welfare recipients in work programs. Moreover, the bill establishes a five-year lifetime limit on TANF benefits, although states can exempt up to 20% of their caseloads and use their own funds to provide assistance after the five-year cutoff.

TANF benefits are prohibited to those convicted of drug felonies, single mothers who refuse to help identify the fathers of their children, families without minor children, and teen parents unless they stay in school and live with an adult. Most legal immigrants who are not citizens will lose eligibility for food stamps and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). States will decide whether to provide TANF or Medicaid benefits to legal immigrants.

Current welfare child care programs are converted into a block grant to states, which may not cut off TANF to a parent with a child under six who could not work because of a lack of child care.

The bill also tightens eligibility standards for food stamps, and limits childless adults age 50 and under to three months of food stamps in any three year period unless they are working or training for a job. People who are laid off from their jobs during that period could receive an additional three months of food stamp benefits.

Child support enforcement is also strengthened. The bill requires states to develop computerized listings of child support orders and new hires, place more emphasis on paternity establishment, and suspend or restrict the use of driver's licenses, professional licenses, and recreational licenses of parents who are delinquent on child support payments.

The bill is expected to save the federal government $55 billion over the next six years, mostly due to the cuts in food stamps and benefits for legal immigrants.

ASSESSMENT

I think this bill meets several key tests. It moves people from welfare to work, imposes time limits, provides child care and health care, cracks down on child support enforcement, and gives us a chance to break the cycle of dependency. This bill is much better than previous welfare reform legislation considered by Congress, which was too soft on work and too tough on children. Those bills failed to provide adequate child care and health care and imposed deep cuts on school lunches and help for disabled children.

This bill turns upside down the relationship between Washington and the states on welfare. Under the present system, states share the cost of welfare, but Washington writes most of the rules and provides a large share of the money, especially when the welfare rolls rise. Under this bill, the federal and state governments will continue to share the cost but each state will manage its own program and be responsible for coming up with extra money if the federal money is not enough. Much responsibility now rests with states.

The idea behind the bill is to get people into jobs, the sooner the better, and then try to develop ways to sustain them in the workforce. It envisions welfare offices as job placements centers where applicants are steered toward training and work rather than handed a check.

But this is far from a perfect bill. I'm concerned about the estimates that the bill will make hundreds of thousands of children poorer. Legal immigrants who have played by the rules and have played by the rules and have every reason to assume that they are welcome here, will be stripped of their federal benefits. The roughly $24 billion cut in food stamps over the next six years is very deep. One of the questions the bill does not confront is what to do about people who are willing to work but cannot find a job. And negotiations will almost certainly continue between the federal government and the states over welfare rules.

I think all of us want to push people off of welfare who are able to work, but this bill probably does not do enough to help people become self-sustaining. I am deeply concerned that the major part of our budget cutting efforts in this Congress is focused on reducing programs for the poor.

When dealing with welfare I think we all have to admit a certain level of humility. There are so many people on welfare today with so many different problems that it is extremely difficult to gauge exactly how these changes will impact them. There will be continuing efforts to review programs for job training, education, and economic investments. Already legislation has been introduced aimed at curing the deeper ills of communities. This bill does not solve the desperate problems of chronic poverty in America, and so almost certainly we have not heard the last of the welfare debate.

The real choice was between the present system and this bill. My conclusion is that we simply have to be willing to let states experiment to find ways to break the cycle of dependency that keeps dragging people down. In my view, the bill probably represents our best hope for figuring out how to solve the problems of the poor and underclass.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY'S [EPA] PROPOSED CLUSTER RULE FOR THE PULP AND PAPER INDUSTRY:

HON. MICHAEL D. CRAPO

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 11, 1996

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to provide comments on the proposed Cluster rule for the pulp and paper industry, and specifically comments on the EPA's July 15 Federal Register notice. The forest and paper industry provides significant jobs and economic benefits in our State and its local communities. Several of us have communicated with EPA's staff directly in the past to express our concern about the original 1993 proposal. We believe strongly that EPA can, and should be able to achieve important environmental goals without damaging our State and communities. We commend EPA's efforts to improve the proposed rule, first in last spring's Federal Register notice on the MACT portion of the Cluster rule, and most recently in the July 15 notice. We urge you to promptly issue a final Cluster rule that incorporates these and other necessary improvements.

One of the many improvements that has been announced for consideration for the final rule is the selection of option A as the basis for best available technology limits. The July 15 notice identifies this option as the most cost-effective, noting that it appears to provide comparable benefits to the more costly option, especially in the area reductions in key pollutant parameters.

Improving the cost-effectiveness of the Cluster rule will also help ensure the success of the voluntary incentives program EPA has proposed. We encourage EPA to continue to seek new ways of achieving greater regulatory flexibility. For this new program to succeed, EPA must ensure that the criteria are focused on improvements in environmental measures and the incentives provide meaningful inducements for potential participants.

We urge EPA again to move forward promptly to issue a final rule incorporating option A and the other improvements being considered. We believe that such a rule would protect the environment as well as the jobs employing the men and women who support Idaho's local communities.