

tax rate increase does not violate the constitutional requirements that a majority must be present to do business.

The bottom line is this: A majority of the House, under the Constitution, may determine the rules of the proceedings including a requirement that a larger majority may be required to do certain things. For instance, for 125 years in this body we have required a two-thirds vote to suspend House rules and pass legislation under this procedure. No one has ever challenged that rule.

This House has also adopted a rule that says it does not even want to have introduced, let alone considered, certain commemorative bills. We banned bills by the rules of this House, and it was a very good rule which I helped to put in.

So long as no basic constitutional principle or rights are being violated, which they are not in any of these rules, a House majority may adopt the rules of its proceedings regarding the introduction, consideration, or passage of legislation.

So, Mr. Speaker, that is something which, according to the Supreme Court, cannot be challenged in any other body or any other tribunal. A court challenge to our new rules will be dismissed on these very grounds, and thank goodness for the American taxpayer.

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

[Mr. LAFALCE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

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

[Mr. HOYER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF THE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT ON THE STATE OF TEXAS

The Speaker pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. GENE GREEN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I take the floor to discuss again the possible effects of the Personal Responsibility Act, the PRA, on the State of Texas. This measure reforms welfare in many ways. Unfortunately, it also repeals a number of nutrition programs such as the school nutrition program and also the senior citizens lunches which, for Texas, would be disastrous.

A recent USDA study says this PRA reveals Texas would lose over a billion dollars in fiscal year 1996 alone. The reduction in funding for Texas represents a 30-percent reduction in funding for

school lunches and senior citizens lunches.

Under the block grant arrangement, Federal funds would first be awarded to the State and then allocated to the programs throughout the State. However, many nutrition programs, such as the school lunch, already go directly to the school districts.

Adding an additional bureaucracy to funnel funds appears contradictory to the premise of the block grants, when everyone agrees we need to cut the layer of bureaucracy not increase, but this Personal Responsibility Act is another layer to take away funding directly to the school children and seniors.

Local school districts could take deep cuts in funding. The Aldine Independent School District, where my children went to school, will have their food budget reduced by over \$2 million and require a lunch costing \$1.35 now to be increased to \$1.75 and maybe even more. This could mean thousands of students in the Aldine area might not be able to afford a nutritious lunch.

The Pasadena School District in Harris County that I also represent part of, 50 percent of their meals are served this year by a free or reduced price of lunches. The number of free meals have tripled in the past 6 years.

The Houston Independent School District provides 118,797 free or reduced meals every year, and they would be reduced.

Tufts University Center for Hunger states that iron deficiency anemia affects nearly 25 percent of the poor children in the United States and impairs their cognitive development.

The Tufts study further states that the longer a child's nutritional and emotional and educational needs go unmet there is a greater overall cognitive deficit.

While I think we can all agree that reforming welfare is needed, the needs of the school children are of paramount importance. This may not be how the people of Texas thought how welfare reform would begin, but it currently is written into this Personal Responsibility Act and will increase the hunger for Texas children and senior citizens.

I would like to paraphrase a letter from the Aldine Independent School District from our executive director of Food Services that says, "We are proud of what we do. Last year we received \$7,900,000 from the Federal Government for reimbursement for free and reduced, prepaid meals and food commodity programs."

□ 2110

They serve an average of 12,000 breakfasts a day and 24,000 lunches a day to Aldine children. They are proud of what they do, and many students in Aldine get their nutrition from the school cafeteria which enables them to perform better academically in the classroom. The food served at the schools goes directly to that child. It does not go to their parent. It goes to that child, and a hungry child cannot

learn. These children are already here, so we need to nurture them and educate them so they can become healthy and productive members of society. We do not need to turn our backs on society's most least fortunate, our children, our senior citizens. Mr. Speaker, I ask that the House change this Personal Responsibility Act to reflect the needs that are reflected in our children.

FEBRUARY 8, 1995.

The Hon. GENE GREEN,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN GREEN: Aldine ISD provides an excellent education to children in middle to lower income families. There are 46,000 students enrolled in Aldine ISD. The Aldine Food Service department received \$7,947,557.71 from the federal government in reimbursements for free, reduced-price, and paid meals and food commodity value in the 1993-94 school year. We serve an average of 12,000 breakfasts a day, and 24,000 lunches a day to Aldine children.

If the block grant proposal is passed as is, with a 30% reduction in the funds provided to Texas, impact on the Aldine Food Service department would be a loss of \$2,384,267.30. This reduction in funds would mean a large increase in breakfast and lunch prices, reduction in labor, and reduction in spending to businesses in this area. Many children in Aldine would not be able to afford the increase in price for lunch and breakfast. Our department has always operated in the black with all excess funds being reinvested into the Child Nutrition Program to benefit students. These cuts would most likely throw us into the red.

We are proud of what we do. Many of the students in Aldine get their best nutrition in the school cafeteria which enables them to perform their best academically in the classroom. The food served at schools goes directly to the child, not through a parent or guardian. A hungry child cannot learn!

These children are already here, so we need to nurture and educate them so that they become healthy, productive members of society. Your support in our endeavor will benefit us all.

Thank you!
Sincerely,

JOYCE H. LYONS,
Executive Director of
Food Services Aldine
ISD.

MELANIE B. KONARIK,
Assistant Director of
Food Services Aldine
ISD.

UNDER THE CONTRACT WITH AMERICA WORK IS A PENALTY RATHER THAN A PRIZE

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

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, the Contract With America proposes to put 1.5 million welfare recipients to work by the year 2001.

On its face, that proposal is appealing. Many of us support welfare reform.

The current system does not encourage self-sufficiency and does not always work well.

Reform, however, does not mean change for the sake of change. Reform means change for the sake of improvement.

Improvement in our welfare system is best accomplished by rewarding work—by making work a prize rather than a penalty.

Work is a prize when a full-time worker can earn enough to pay for life's necessities. Work is a penalty when a person cannot earn enough to pay for food, shelter, clothing, transportation, medical care, and other basic needs.

That is why any discussion of welfare reform must also include a discussion of minimum wage reform.

Under the Contract With America, work would be a penalty rather than a prize.

The work slots proposed to be created by the Personal Responsibility Act would pay \$2.42 an hour for a mother in a family of three.

That hourly wage is almost \$2.00 below the current minimum wage of \$4.25. In Mississippi, pay under the Contract With America would equal just seventy-nine cents per hour.

That is a penalty. That is not a prize.

It is noteworthy, Mr. Speaker, that the vast majority of those who will be forced to work at below minimum wage earnings are women.

It is also noteworthy that 6 out of 10 of all minimum wage workers are women.

And, contrary to a popular misconception, most minimum wage earners are adults, not young people.

In addition, many of the minimum wage workers are from rural communities. In fact, it is twice as likely that a minimum wage worker will be from a rural community than from an urban community.

Most disturbingly, far too many minimum wage workers have families, spouses, and children who depend on them.

That is disturbing, Mr. Speaker, because a full-time worker, heading a family of three—the typical size of an American family today—and earning a minimum wage, would fall below the poverty line by close to \$2,500 dollars.

In this country, a person can work, every day, full-time, and still be below the poverty level. Work, in that situation, is a penalty.

A review of the history of the minimum wage is revealing. First implemented in 1938, with passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act, the minimum wage covers 90 percent of all workers.

Between 1950 and 1981, the minimum wage was raised 12 times. During the 1980's, however, while prices were rising by almost 50 percent, Congress did not raise the minimum wage.

I spoke yesterday, Mr. Speaker, of the impact of a frozen minimum wage during the decade of the 1980's when income dropped and costs escalated.

While the minimum wage stood at \$3.34 an hour, the average cost of a do-

mestic automobile increased from less than \$9,000 to more than \$16,000.

The average cost of local transit went from thirty cents to seventy cents.

While the poor got poorer and the minimum wage stood stagnant, the average per capita cost of health care more than doubled, from \$1,064 per person annually to \$2,601.

From 1980 to 1990, the average cost of a half gallon of milk went from ninety-six cents to a dollar and thirty-nine cents.

The average retail cost of bread went from forty-six cents to seventy cents during this period.

And, a dozen of eggs, which cost 85 cents in 1980, cost more than \$1 by 1990.

In short, Mr. Speaker, while the bottom 20 percent of America lost income and got poorer, the minimum wage was frozen, and cost climbed.

Low income workers are yet to recover from that period. They are still far behind the cost of living and further behind high income workers.

Most importantly, raising wages does not mean losing jobs. Recent, comprehensive study dramatically demonstrates this conclusion.

In my State of North Carolina, for example, a survey of employment practices after the 1991 minimum wage increase is instructive.

That survey found that there was no significant drop in employment and no measurable increase in food prices.

Indeed, the survey found, workers' wages actually increased by more than the required change. The State of Mississippi was also the subject of that study.

When a person works, he or she feels good about themselves. They contribute to their communities, and they are in a position to help their families. Work gives a person an identity.

Our policies, therefore, should encourage people to work. We discourage them from working when we force them to work at wages that leave them in poverty.

When Congress has the opportunity to raise the minimum wage, let's make rewarding work and wage reform an essential part of welfare reform.

Let's encourage people to work. And, let us insure that they can work at a livable wage.

Mr. Speaker, we support a minimum wage that affords every American a livable wage.

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

[Mr. CLYBURN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereinafter in the Extension of Remarks.]

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentleman from Ohio

[Mr. HOKE] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

REVIEW OF LEGISLATION ALREADY PASSED IN THE 104TH CONGRESS

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, tonight I have asked some of my good friends in the House to join me in a special order where what we are going to do is review some of the legislation that has already been passed in the 104th Congress, and then we are going to continue to talk about some of the things that have not been passed yet but that we are working on. It is all part of the program that we call our Contract With America.

I have asked the gentlewoman from Washington [Mrs. SMITH] the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON], and the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. BYRANT] to join me in this, and what I wanted to do first is I have got a nice chart here that is courtesy of the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON], and I want to use this red pen to talk about some of the things that we have done already.

What we have done is on the very first day of Congress we had promised that a Republican House would, first of all, require Congress to live under the same laws as every other American. We have done that.

We also said that we are going to cut one out of every three congressional committee staffs. We have done that.

And we said that we would cut the congressional budget. We did that as well.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we promised the American people that we are going to pass a balanced budget amendment and a line-item veto, and we said that we would give relief to our States, counties and local cities on unfunded mandates, and we have done that as well.

Now I think one of the things that I want to point out this evening about everything that we have done is because there is so much partisanship that happens on this floor that we see every single day, one would think that there was an open battle going on between the minority and the majority, the Democrats and the Republicans, on a daily basis. Let us review the bidding for just a moment because I think that maybe, Mr. Speaker, you will find these numbers rather surprising:

First of all, the Congressional Accountability Act requiring that every single law of the land also require, be applied, to Congress. Two hundred Democrats joined every single Republican in voting for that.

□ 2120

It was completely unanimous. When it came to the unfunded mandates bill that we passed last Thursday, 130 Democrats joined us to pass that bill. The line-item veto, 71 Democrats joined us. The balanced budget amendment, 72 Democrats joined us. We passed just yesterday and today, three