

home there will be less food. In the morning when they wake up there will be less or no food, and when they go to school there will not be any breakfast program at the school for them.

How are they going to learn on empty stomachs, their stomachs growling and turning around and churning because they have not gotten the nutrition that they need?

The majority party, quite simply, does not care if poor children in this country eat or not.

Is the majority party taking this mean-spirited approach in order to reduce the deficit? Oh, no, Mr. Speaker, not to balance the budget, not to reduce the deficit, but to give a tax cut to the wealthy. How callous can you get, taking food from children to give fat cats more money?

□ 2110

Let us look at it. These young children out here, we have got a man and a wife working part-time, making a little over minimum wage. They are making about \$20,000 a year, \$19,000, \$19,000 a year. They are scraping by. They have got two kids. They are eligible for food stamps. In some ways they are eligible for a reduced price for the school lunch.

But when they pass their bills on welfare reform, they call it, those folks are not going to get anything.

Well, they say, hey, we are going to give you a \$500 per child tax cut. That is what we are going to do for you.

But for that couple, folks, and those children, that \$500 is zip. It is nothing, because it is not a refundable tax cut. So they do not get a thing.

But what they are doing is, they are saying, those kids, you do not need any help, because your parents are making all of \$20,000, you do not need any help.

You know what they say who really needs the money, folks? Who really needs that money? Well, under their tax bill, the man and wife who are making \$200,000, \$200,000, they are going to get, for those same two kids, they are going to get \$1,000; \$1,000 is what they are going to get. And they tell you those people making that \$200,000 need it. They need it for their kids. But the one making \$18,000, \$19,000, they do not need anything, they need less. And that is what they are going to get from the majority party.

You know why they say that \$200,000 couple needs that money, that thousand dollars for their kids? They need it so they can be the leaders of this country, so they can go to Harvard and Yale and all those other places and they can sock the money away. So if you have ever seen Robin Hood in reverse, just watch the next 35 days, America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LONGLEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. WELDON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

FEDERAL FOOD ASSISTANCE

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

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, from yesterday morning into the wee hours of this morning, for 15 hours, the Committee on Agriculture marked-up title five of the Personal Responsibility Act. That bill, with great reductions and many restrictions on feeding hungry Americans, is now poised for consideration on the House floor. Leadership of the committee is to be commended for eliminating the mandate for block granting the Food Stamp Program.

A State option on block grants, however, remains in title five and will be an issue on the floor. Also, during mark-up, the committee accepted my amendment, which requires persons 18 to 50 years old, those who must work for food stamps, to be paid at least the minimum wage for their labor. Without my amendment, the bill would have forced many food stamp recipients to work for less than 1 dollar an hour. The agriculture committee was wise to support the amendment. But, with action by other committees, the block grant issue continues to loom large and will be hotly contested during floor consideration.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge our colleagues, as we consider the block grant issue, to recall their days in school. Recall the importance of a hearty breakfast and a healthy lunch. Recall the necessity of the mid-morning and mid-afternoon milk or snack break. Recall the sense of urgency each of you felt the first time you experienced the pangs of hunger. And, recall how the ache of not being fed in your stomachs prevented you from being fed in your minds. Mr. Speaker, this debate is not about party or politics or pocketbooks. This debate is about our young, and our old. This debate is about strong bodies and clear minds. This debate is about the future of this Nation. Understanding the future, however, sometimes lies in remembering the past. Recall the infant mortality rate in America before the WIC Program. That rate has been lowered by as much as 66 percent, in some cases. WIC works. Babies don't die today like they died in the past, because we invested in life. Recall the fact that since the Institution of Nutrition Programs, the gap between the diets of low-income and other families has narrowed, significantly. Stunting has decreased by 65 percent. Anemia has dramatically improved. Low birthweights are down. Mr. Speaker, it is easy to forget. Members of Congress dine at some of the finest restaurants. Eating is taken for granted. Hunger is unknown. But, while it is easy to forget, it is dangerous to fail to remember. This Nation is strong because we

care for our weak. Every citizen is important. All can make a contribution. But, none, who is hungry, can participate or contribute in any meaningful way. Even those incarcerated in our jails and prisons, throughout the United States, are assured of three square meals a day. Surely, our children and seniors should get nothing less.

Mr. Speaker, I have been increasingly concerned about how rapidly we are making major and dramatic changes to the way our Government functions, indeed, many of our colleagues have commented on the pace of this Congress. It seems that we are emphasizing quantity at the expense of quality, and, more importantly, at the expense of the American people. The U.S. Constitution has been amended just 27 times in more than 200 years, yet this Congress has proposed several new amendments in less than 50 days. Moreover, in the space of fewer than 3 months, we have proposed a balanced budget amendment, passed unfunded mandates legislation, proposed a Presidential line-item veto, rewritten last year's crime bill, passed a plethora of regulatory reform measures, acted on defense spending and national security matters in a couple of days, considered term limits, welfare reform and rescissions, and we are now in the midst of tort reform. In our rush to meet an artificial, 100-day goal, it is a fair question to ask, are we hurting more than we are helping? Consider an article which appeared in today's New York Times. When the Personal Responsibility Act was marked up by the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities, the language passed resulted in 57,000 children of military families being denied access to the State feeding programs that would be established. To restore this feeding program for the military, it will cost the Pentagon more than \$5 million for meals and another \$5 million for administrative costs. It seems, Mr. Speaker, that we profess to want a strong military, yet we pass legislation that will cause military children to go hungry. These actions are either mean spirited or grossly negligent. Either way, America suffers.

I urge my colleagues to stand up against nutrition program block grants. Let us demonstrate that a wise and thankful Nation really does remember.

WELFARE REFORM

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

Mr. TALENT. Mr. Speaker, on March 21, the House will take up comprehensive, real and historic welfare reform. The object of that bill will be an historic and fundamental change in the direction of our welfare policy, away from a failed system that is destroying the poor and towards a system of relief

and a system of relief and assistance that is based on marriage, on family, on work and on personal responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, how is the welfare system hurting the poor? First and foremost, it is destroying their families. Let us take a look at this graph here on my left.

In 1965, Mr. Speaker, one out of 15 children in the United States, about 6 percent, were born out of wedlock. Federal and State welfare spending at that time was about 30 billion. Today the out-of-wedlock birth rate is one out of three. It has increased by six times since 1965. The welfare spending has gone up 10 times to about \$300 billion a year.

Welfare spending has not brought us a decrease in poverty, as I will show in a minute. It has caused an explosion in illegitimacies. The best social studies also agree. A controlled study in New Jersey showed that a small restriction in the growth of welfare benefits caused a 30 percent reduction in illegitimacy. And June O'Neill, who is the current head of the Congressional Budget Office, conducted a study showing that a 50 percent increase in AFDC and food stamps led to a 43 percent increase in the out-of-wedlock birth rate.

President Clinton has said there is no question that if we reduced Aid to Families with Dependent Children, and I am sure he meant substituting that with a different form of assistance for the poor, it would be some incentive for people not to have dependent children out of wedlock.

So history, social science, the President and common sense all agree: the welfare system as it is currently structured with its current incentives destroys families. It promotes illegitimacy by promising young men and women a measure of security and independence through a welfare package, but if and only if they have a child without being married, without having a work skill and earlier than they otherwise would. That means that the existing welfare system causes poverty, because, Mr. Speaker, work and marriage are essential to eliminating poverty. The best antipoverty programs are family and work.

I invite the House to look at the next graph. The red line in that graph shows the poverty rate in the postwar era. It has declined steadily all throughout that era until about 1965, when it reached approximately 15 percent.

The blue shaded area on the graph shows State and Federal spending on welfare since 1948. As the graph shows, that welfare spending held basically steady until about 1965, when the Great Society programs were started. At that time it exploded and increased by a factor of 10 times to about \$300 billion.

At the same time as we were increasing welfare spending by a factor of 10 times, the poverty rate actually increased slightly. It was a little under 15 percent in 1965, and now it is a little bit over 15 percent.

In the last generation, the Federal Government has transferred trillions of dollars to the poor. But the welfare system at the same time has destroyed their families and, therefore, their incentives to seek the American dream for themselves and their children.

□ 2120

It is as if you are bailing out a boat with one hand while you were pouring water into the boat with the other.

Mr. Speaker, as we proceed through this debate on welfare we should remember two principles. The debate over welfare should not be about blaming the poor. It is the Federal Government that has perversely given material assistance to the poor on the conditions that they accept the kind of innervating spiritual poverty. We should not reform this system because people on welfare are abusing it, although that does happen. We should reform the welfare system because the system has been abusing people on welfare.

The second principle is this: Welfare reform shouldn't mean abandoning the poor. America must stand or fall together as a people with common ideals and aspirations. Welfare reform should mean bringing back the welfare system to reliance on those ideals.

My friend, the distinguished freshman from Oklahoma [Mr. WATTS] put it this way. He says that for the past 30 years the Federal Government has measured the success of welfare by how many people we could get on AFDC and food stamps and medicaid.

We need to measure success by a different index. Real welfare reform means measuring success this way by how many people we can get off of AFDC, food stamps and medicaid and into a life of dignity and hope. That is what the fight for welfare reform over the coming weeks in this House should be about. It is a fight that we can and must and will win for all of the American people.

ISSUES IN AMERICAN POLITICS

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

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, let me just touch upon a few issues that are very rarely talked about in this Congress. We do a lot of talking about a lot of things but I am always amazed that sometimes the very most important issues that face the American people, the dynamics of our Nation seem to be ignored here in the Congress. So let me just touch upon a few points that I consider to be quite important.

Number one, if we are to understand the dynamics of American politics, it might be appropriate to understand that in the U.S. Congress today approximately 20 percent of the Members of Congress themselves are millionaires. And everything being equal, until we get campaign finance reform,

we can only expect that number to increase.

A democracy is supposed to mean that ordinary people can run for office, ordinary people can get elected to represent their neighbors back home. Clearly, there is something wrong in this country today when at a time that perhaps one-half of 1 percent of our people are millionaires, 20 percent of the Members of the House and Senate of millionaires.

We recently had a gentleman in California who took out his checkbook wrote himself a check for \$25 million in attempting to buy the Senate seat in that State, and that is happening increasingly. So if we want to understand why the policies of the U.S. Congress so often work to reflect the interest of the wealthy and the powerful, it has something to do with who is in Congress and who funds people who go to Congress.

Many of you may have seen in the papers that last month the Republican Party held a fundraiser. It was a nice little fundraiser. It was only \$1,000 a plate. It was a good dinner. Nice dessert. It was a good bargain. The point is that the Republican Party on that night left with \$11 million.

Now, why do people go to a dinner at a \$1,000 a plate? The food is good, that is true, but there are other reasons and the reasons might be that they are not donating, they are investing.

Now, as the only Independent in Congress I would point out the Democrats are not far behind. They also have dinners of that kind. Wealthy people invest so that when this session, this Congress comes together, they vote tax breaks for the wealthiest people. They vote for trade policies which help large corporations export our jobs to Third World countries. That is a very, very serious problem. We desperately need campaign finance reform so that we can limit the amount of money that can be spent on a campaign and that we can really have democracy in this institution.

Number two, another issue that we don't often talk about is the very, very unfair distribution of wealth in America. Very rarely is that talked about. It is important to point out that in the United States today the wealthiest 1 percent of the population owns more wealth, not that bottom 90 percent. We have a situation now where the chief executive officers of the largest corporations in America are earning 150 times what their workers are earning.

Now, nobody thinks that everybody in America should all earn the same amount of money, but clearly there is something very wrong when so few people have so much money, while at the same time, the middle class is shrinking and at the same time poverty in America is growing.

While the richest 1 percent of the population own 37 percent of the wealth in America, we have 18 percent of our workers, people who are working