

and then live up to it to vote for whatever version of term limits comes out of here next Wednesday when we finally get a chance after all of these years to vote on term limits and vote for whatever version is on the floor for final passage.

If it is the gentleman's version out here with retroactivity in it, BILL MCCOLLUM is going to vote for it. I urge them to do so. I happen not to prefer that, I prefer another version, but I think we need to put all of the term limits business in perspective, and that is why I am out to help do that a little bit this evening.

Next week this House of Representatives is going to have an opportunity to cast a historic vote. For the first time in the history of this country in either the House or the Senate, we are going to get to vote on a constitutional amendment to limit the terms of Members of the House and Senate. Just two Congresses ago, in the 102d, there were not more than about 33 Members of the House willing to publicly support term limits. In the last Congress, in the 103d, thanks to the sophomore class that came in of both parties last time, we got up to 107. Now we are trying to get to 290, the magic number it takes to pass a constitutional amendment to give us term limits throughout this Nation.

I do not know if we are going to achieve 290, but I think it is going to be a very big successful day for term limits getting to the floor and having the vote. And I believe we are going to go well over 200. We have a good chance and we are working very hard to get 290, but we need everybody who says they support term limits, and I hope they really do, to be there, to be there on the final vote, to cast their vote yes for whatever is out here.

There are going to be four options. Yes, my bill is the base bill, but it may not be the one that is finally there standing. I personally favor 12 years in the Senate, 12 years in the House. I think it makes a lot more sense than versions that have a shorter number of years in the House of Representatives to cap the length of time you can serve here. I personally believe that it would be a very serious problem in terms of the power of the House versus the power of the Senate if we had the House serving less time. I think you would have a stronger Senate vis-a-vis the House and a weaker House if that occurred, and I do not think that is smart for us to do 6 or 8 years for the House and 12 years for the Senate.

So I think 12 and 12 is the right balance.

I also think 6 years is too short, but that version is going to be out here. I think it is too short in the sense from my experience here, as complex as this government is, you need to be here about that length of time, 6 years before I want you to be a full committee chairman or in leadership of either of the parties, but that is a judgment call on my part.

Mr. ENGLISH is also going to offer 6 and 12. If it gets enough votes to be here on final passage, I am going to vote for that, I am going to encourage you to vote for it.

Then we are going to have an option out on the floor, Mr. HILLEARY's option that will say we pass a 12-year cap for the House and Senate and if the States want to decide under that 12-year cap whatever they want to decide in lesser years, then they ought to be allowed to do that and we will put it in the Constitution. I personally do not favor that. I happen to think that that is going to allow a lot of hodge-podge around the country for years to come with some States with 6 for the House and some 8 and gosh, maybe 4 and 10 and so forth.

□ 2000

I do not think that is good Government. I think uniformity throughout the Nation is preferable. My particular proposal is going to be silent with regard to what the Supreme Court is going to decide. It would not preempt the State. If the Supreme Court decides in the Arkansas case later on this spring that the State provisions that have been passed around the country for 6, or 8 or other years is a constitutional thing to do, then they will indeed prevail but the 12-year cap will be there, and the Hilleary idea will be ingrained into law by virtue of the Supreme Court decision, but I do not think it is a good idea, and I think, if the Supreme Court decides the present powers of the States do not exist in the Constitution to do this, then we should not give them the additional powers. We should go ahead and pass my version of the amendment, and then it would become at that point, if the court rules otherwise, it rules that States cannot do this, the uniform national 12-year standard. But if the Hilleary proposal prevails here and it is the wisdom of the majority to have it as the substitute amendment, I am going to vote for that on final passage, and I hope my colleagues do, too.

And, yes, the Democrat version with retroactivity is in there. I do not agree with that. I happen to think that all 22 States that have passed term limit proposals in the States are right. They did not pass retroactivity in any of those States, and in the one State it came up, in Washington State, they defeated it and had to come back later with one that was not retroactive. I do not think that is smart. We can debate it out here, but, if that version happens to prevail, I am going to vote for it, too, on final passage.

The bottom line is we have a chance finally to do what the American people, nearly 80 percent, have been saying all along, and that is for us to pass a term limits constitutional amendment, and nobody should try to hide or be allowed to hide under dodge of one preference or the other. The key is going to be to get to final passage and vote yes. I say to my colleagues, "If you don't

vote yes for term limits on final passage, don't come back to your voters next year and tell them you're for term limits."

H.R. 4 REWARDS THE RICH, CHEATS THE CHILDREN AND IS WEAK ON WORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CALVERT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California [Ms. PELOSI] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, in one hand I have letters from the students of Cesar Chavez Elementary School in San Francisco asking President Clinton and the Congress not to cut the school lunch program. In the other hand I have H.R. 4, the Republican so-called welfare reform bill. Mr. Speaker, I hope never the twain shall meet. I hope that the children of Cesar Chavez Elementary School, or any of the other children throughout this country, never have to feel the pain of this legislation. I hope it does not pass.

Mr. Speaker, why I hope it does not pass is because in this legislation is contained provisions that will cut the children's nutritional programs, and, yes, even the school lunch programs. Why? Because it does not provide enough money to cover all of those programs because it does not require the Governors of the States to spend 100 percent of the school lunch monies that are sent to the State, but only 80 percent because it eliminates the nutritional standards that are contained in the school lunch program presently, because it eliminates the eligibility that is contained presently in it so that poor children, who really need nutrition, will suffer from this legislation.

And why is that?

That is because our Republican colleagues want to save money for a tax break for the wealthiest Americans. Why start with children first? Women and children first were traditionally those first to the lifeboats. Here they are first to the gangplank, to walk the plank.

Mr. Speaker, I yield now to the gentleman from California [Mr. FARR]. As he comes up, I want him to join me in recognizing that this school lunch program cut will cut 503,000 children, will be dropped from the school lunch program under the Republican plan in the first year.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I say that H.R. 4, the Republican so-called welfare reform bill, rewards the rich, cheats the children and is weak on work, and in our State of California, and the gentleman from California [Mr. FARR] and I will place this on the map together—67,900 children will be cut from the school lunch program in just the first year.

I urge my colleagues to vote no on H.R. 4, and I am pleased to yield to my colleague from California.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the gentlewoman yielding to me, and I want to bring up a point about H.R. 4.

It takes food away from poor kids to fund tax breaks for the wealthy, sort of Robin Hood in reverse. According to the California Department of Education, each day 745,000 children will no longer be eligible for school and child care needs. Almost 1,000,000 kids a day, will no longer be eligible for meals.

H.R. 4 really hurts because it abolishes the donated food program, donated food. Right now 49 counties in California have been declared natural disasters. More than 6,000 pounds of food has already been delivered.

In the Loma Prieta earthquake 880,000 pounds of food were delivered. H.R. 4 eliminates those food donation programs.

People in my district are livid. A letter from John Cruz, superintendent of Fowler Unified School District in Fowler, California, writes:

Living in an agricultural area with a large population of low-income students, I am keenly aware of the negative impact this legislation will have on our students and parents. You can rest assured that a large number of students will come to school hungry. We make every effort to overcome obstacles so that we can effectively educate our students. But hunger has no remedy but a warm meal, served in the comfort of a school cafeteria. I understand that tough decisions must be made, but please don't make them at the expense of our kids.

This is a bad bill. I urge everyone to oppose it.

Not to mention the fact that this bill abolishes the donated food program—donated food, Mr. Speaker—which is crucial during natural disasters like the devastating floods that have pounded my district this year. More than 880,000 pounds of food was delivered to needy families who fell victim to the natural disasters of the Loma Prieta and Northridge earthquakes. Six thousand pounds have already been delivered during the recent floods in my district.

I have received hundreds of letters from community leaders across California and throughout the country who are alarmed by the threat this GOP bill poses to kids. John Cruz, superintendent, of Fowler Unified School District in Fowler, California writes:

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Suzanne Du Verrier, supervisor for Alisal School District food services department in Salinas, California writes:

School lunch is not a welfare program. Including school lunch in Personal Responsibility Act as a part of the nutrition block

grant would become an administrative nightmare for States and the various school districts. All the work that has been done to bring meal requirements into a healthier realm will evaporate. Our Nation's children must not pay for the sins of the Nation's adults.

Maria Doyle, from Monterey, writes:

This approach will increase child care costs for low- and middle-income parents, even forcing children out of regulated care and back into latch-key situations.

Finally, little 8-year-old Annie Brown of Salinas, writes:

Everyone needs to learn to love, please don't hurt the children.

Mr. Speaker, don't be mistaken, Democrats across the board are demanding change. Democrats want to reform welfare, but we know we can do it without putting the health of innocent children at risk.

Democrats believe that we must move people from welfare to work not homeless shelters. We should demand and reward work rather than punishing those who go to work. This mean-spirited GOP measure will hurt far more than it will help Americans who want to free themselves from the destructive grasp of social welfare programs. It will only throw them out into the street, without the benefit of the training they need for meaningful employment or the child care they need for their children.

H.R. 4 is poorly conceived legislation and deserves to be rejected. It's been rushed through Congress for one purpose and one purpose only: campaign P.R. and a spot on the nightly news. The children of my district can't stand up to this Speaker's bully pulpit, but I can, and I encourage my colleagues to do so as well.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from California, and I would simply like to rise to oppose H.R. 4 because I think there is some misinformation around, and that is that the H.R. 4 does not cut school lunch. There is something about a 4.5 percent increase, and let me simply say to you that first of all H.R. 4 has no money for school lunches, and, second of all, the cash assistance does not take into consideration the value of direct food purchases, and there is no guaranteed funding level. We in Texas lose some \$690 million in school nutrition programs or total nutrition programs, and let me tell you that the State of Texas loses 58,400 children that will not have lunch.

Let us vote against H.R. 4. Let us stand for the children.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] for her leadership on this issue and for informing us of the impact of the Republican cuts in Texas.

WELFARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Ohio [Mr. CHABOT] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker I yield to the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HOKE].

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out in this child nutrition school based block grant and current law, CRS report dated March 20, that in the State of California the increase from 1996 over 1995 on these school based programs is from \$808 million to \$854 million, an increase of \$46 million.

Mr. CHABOT. Reclaiming the balance of my time, Mr. Speaker, I would like to read a direct quote, what one of our former Presidents said about welfare. Here is what he said:

The lessons of history show conclusively the continued dependence upon relief induces a spiritual and moral disintegration fundamentally disruptive to the national fiber. To dole out relief in this way is to administer a narcotic, a subtle destroyer of the human spirit.

Now some of my liberal Democratic colleagues on the other side of the aisle would probably call that statement mean spirited. But do you know who said that? Which one of our Presidents? Well, he was a Democrat. It was Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He was speaking to Congress, and he was absolutely right.

Sadly, Congress did not listen. Instead the Federal welfare monstrosity tore families apart. It destroyed individual initiative and mocked the concept of personal responsibility. It has become the narcotic, the destroyer of the human spirit, that Franklin Roosevelt decried. The welfare system has trapped millions upon millions of Americans in a snare of dependency.

□ 2015

Generation after generation of people in this country never work. They get a welfare check every month, and they live off those Americans who do work. It is an absolute disgrace, in fact. And here may be the saddest fact of all. Innocent children born into the welfare habit are 300 percent more likely than others to be on welfare when they grow up.

We have kids all over this country who grow up in homes where they never see an adult in the home go to work. But I refuse to believe that we should write off entire generations and consign them forever to desperate and unproductive lives.

As terrible and as horrifying as it is, there are some politicians who have a vested interest in perpetuating the current system of handouts. This determination to hold people down is sickening, but the huge Federal welfare bureaucracy has real political power.

The architects of the current disgraceful system fight hard to keep what they have created, and those who have been complicit in creating the cycle of dependence that is our current welfare system simply do not want to see any changes at all.

When those of us who are working for reform propose some initial efforts to