

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the following section-by-section analysis:

H.R. 28—RURAL MULTIFAMILY RENTAL HOUSING LOAN GUARANTEE EXTENSION ACT OF 1997

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.—The title is cited as the "Rural Multifamily Rental Housing Loan Guarantee Extension Act of 1997."

SEC. 2. LOAN GUARANTEES FOR MULTIFAMILY RENTAL HOUSING IN RURAL AREAS.—This section amends Section 538 of the Housing Act of 1949 to provide a permanent authorization of appropriations and permanent authority to the [US Department of Agriculture] Secretary to guarantee rural housing multifamily loans.

□ 1500

Mr. LAZIO of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York [Mr. LAZIO] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 28.

The question was taken.

Mr. LAZIO of New York. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5 of rule I and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LAZIO of New York. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 28.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

PREVENTING PRISONERS FROM BEING CONSIDERED PART OF HOUSEHOLD UNDER FOOD STAMP ACT OF 1977

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1000) to require States to establish a system to prevent prisoners from being considered part of any household for purposes of determining eligibility of the household for food stamp benefits and the amount of food stamp benefits to be provided to the household under the Food Stamp Act of 1977.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1000

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. STATES REQUIRED TO ESTABLISH SYSTEM TO PREVENT PRISONERS FROM BEING CONSIDERED PART OF ANY HOUSEHOLD UNDER THE FOOD STAMP ACT OF 1977.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 11(e)(20) of the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2020(e)(20)) is amended to read as follows:

"(20) that the State agency shall establish a system and take action on a periodic basis—

"(A) to verify and otherwise assure that an individual does not receive coupons in more than one jurisdiction within the State; and

"(B) to verify and otherwise assure that an individual who is officially detained in a correctional, detention, or penal facility administered under Federal or State law is not considered to be part of any household participating in the food stamp program, except to the extent that the Secretary determines that extraordinary circumstances have made it impracticable for the State agency to obtain the information necessary to do so."

(b) PENALTY.—Section 11(g) of the Food Stamp Act of 1977 shall apply, in accordance with its terms, to any failure of a State agency to comply with section 11(e)(20)(B) of such Act.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 11(e)(8)(E) of the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2020(e)(8)(E)) is amended by inserting "or (20)(B)" after "(16)".

(d) APPLICATION OF AMENDMENTS.—The amendments made by this section shall not apply with respect to certification periods beginning before the end of the 1-year period that begins with the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oregon [Mr. SMITH] and the gentlewoman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon [Mr. SMITH].

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. SMITH of Oregon asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1000, a bill that requires States to establish a system to verify that individuals detained in Federal, State, or county penal facilities are not counted as household members for the purposes of determining eligibility of the level of benefits in the Food Stamp Program.

On March 10, 1997, the General Accounting Office released a report entitled, "Food Stamps: Substantial Overpayments Result From Prisoners Counted as Household Members." As a result, the General Accounting Office estimates that \$3.5 million in food stamp benefit overpayments were made in the year 1995.

The Congressional Budget Office has analyzed H.R. 1000 and has concluded requiring a verification system will reduce food stamp benefit overpayments and save an estimated \$6 million by fiscal year 2003. Although States and the Federal Government will incur a slight cost to establish the verification system in fiscal year 1998, that cost will be more than offset in subsequent years.

Based on the findings and conclusions of the General Accounting Office, I believe that the verification system requirement of H.R. 1000 is a cost effective method of preventing prisoners from being counted as members of food stamp households with a minimum burden or inconvenience on food stamp recipients and States. Additionally, requiring this verification will identify and reduce program fraud and increase the collection of benefit overpayments.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1000.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I have been a tireless advocate along with many of my colleagues in fighting hunger in the United States. The bill before us today is aimed at helping to ensure that the funds allocated by the Federal Government for the food stamp program actually go to feed those who are hungry.

In fiscal year 1995, USDA issued over \$22 billion in benefits. Some 26 million Americans were helped by these funds. Congress passed legislation last year to cut the food stamp program by \$23 billion through the year 2002. So the total appropriation for fiscal year 1997 is \$23.3 billion, \$1 billion less than they were in fiscal year 1996, which was \$24.3 billion.

This bill, H.R. 1000, is designed to ensure that we concentrate those declining resources to make sure that those who are in actual need get that help.

Although the Food Stamp Act automatically disqualifies people who were institutionalized from inclusion in participating households because they receive meals during their sentences, oftentimes the food stamp administrative agency is not notified that a member of a household has been incarcerated.

A GAO audit recently published a report which found out of four States studied for calendar 1995, California, Florida, New York, and Texas, 12,138 inmates were included in household food stamp benefits, resulting in an estimated \$3.5 million that was not directed to needy families.

H.R. 1000 will help prevent this from happening in the future as it requires States to establish a system to verify that individuals detained in Federal, State, and county penal institutions are not counted as household members for the purpose specified by the Food Stamp Program.

In fact, a database already exists for States to check. The Social Security Administration maintains such a database, as it too is required to check for inmates participation.

In addition, this legislation takes into account the needs of the various States and permits them some flexibility. Mr. Speaker, I urge every Member of this body to support this legislation as we consider it under suspension of the rules, so that limited funds that we do have allocated to the Food Stamp Program go actually to those who are eligible and to those who are hungry.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. GOODLATTE], the chief sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman of the committee for yielding me this time as well as for his strong support for this legislation.