

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

MAKING A REAL DIFFERENCE

HON. NEWT GINGRICH

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 12, 1998

Mr. GINGRICH. Mr. Speaker, I want to encourage my colleagues to read the following article about a woman in my district who is making a real difference in our community. Deborah Wolf, an attorney and the president of a personnel placement firm, founded a non-profit organization called "Working Wardrobe." Working Wardrobe provides professional apparel for women facing domestic violence or victims of other economic hardships, thus enabling these women to feel confident and look their best for interviews which hopefully lead to fulfilling career opportunities. As we look for ways to shrink the size and scope of government, Working Wardrobe is a shining example of how individuals and community can effectively and more efficiently help those in need. By emphasizing work, personal responsibility and a helping hand, welfare caseloads will continue to plummet, thus strengthening families and children and enabling even the neediest to participate in the American dream.

HELPING NEEDY WOMEN DRESS FOR WORK SUCCESS

(By Ernest Holsendolph)

Dressing for success is no frivolous matter in the business world, and it remains a critical factor for many job applicants. It can be the difference between getting a job or not. Just ask Deborah L. Wolf.

Wolf, a lawyer turned medical personnel placement specialist, said that more frequently than she cares to recall, many qualified, typically female, job seekers fail to get a job simply because they do not have appropriate clothing to wear.

"It is absolutely heartbreaking to see that happen," she said.

An article in Good Housekeeping magazine recently told about organizations around the country that gather clothing for people who want to work but can't afford the proper attire. Wolf, a person of action, has launched Working Wardrobe Inc. in the greater Atlanta area, just in time to help state agencies and others seal the final preparation for female newcomers to the work force.

What Wolf is doing, with the assistance of a growing number of volunteers, is an encouraging sign that private efforts will certainly buttress other work to help people by the thousands move from welfare and other forms of dependency to the workplace.

Working Wardrobe formally will open its doors during the last week of this month, and here is what it will do:

Receive and sort donated clothing from various sources that range from individual donors such as local television personalities and others, to donors like Macy's department store.

Interview and consult with women as they are referred by the state Department of Family and Children's Services or the Labor Department, having been trained and cleared for work.

Get them attired for their initial job interviews and for the first weeks of the job.

Wolf, who has operated her own business, All Medical Personnel, for six years, said she believes this kind of assistance will boost the confidence level of the inexperienced job seekers.

The idea has gotten quick positive response from people who can help. Noteworthy is the offer of 2,500 square feet of space by the Apparel Mart in downtown Atlanta where Wolf and her helpers can launch May 27 or thereabouts.

"This has been a marvelous donation, and just what we needed," Wolf said. The offices will be right there within eyesight of many top apparel makers and distributors. And the downtown location will be reachable by a maximum number of people who need the service because of the proximity to bus lines and the MARTA rail system.

"We want shelters and other organizations whose clients may need this service to be aware of us," Wolf said.

As the volunteer effort grows, Working Wardrobe will need ever larger sources of garments and other apparel, as well as volunteers to process clothing. The items they seek include skirt and pants suits; skirts, blouses, jackets and dresses; as well as overcoats, shoes, pocketbooks, scarfs, belts, jewelry and new pantyhose and cosmetics. No used undergarments, cosmetics or pantyhose will be accepted, nor will men's clothing be accepted.

Wolf said she will also need more volunteers to step forward as consultants to work with the women.

The effort will also need some expertise, including speakers and fund-raisers, as well as people with sewing and tailoring skills to make some items for size 16 and larger, and also mend items needing small repairs.

Wolf, a trained commercial real estate attorney, who found herself beached during a business downturn in the late 1980s, turned entrepreneur in 1991 by launching her medical placement service.

She admits she knows nothing special about business attire, but then she knew nothing about medical careers until she launched her business and learned by doing.

"I'm most grateful for my own opportunity to succeed," Wolf said. "And my effort here to start Working Wardrobe is something I hope can partially pay back our community for the good fortune I have had."

Anyone who can help Working Wardrobe should call 404-320-9125, which currently is located in the offices of All Medical Personnel at 1961 North Druid Hills Rd. Suite 201-A.

BIRTH DEFECTS PREVENTION ACT OF 1997

SPEECH OF

HON. TIM ROEMER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 10, 1998

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the "Birth Defects Prevention Act of 1997" (S. 419). I strongly support this legislation, which responds to a very serious health care problem in the United States today.

Current medical research indicates that birth defects are the leading cause of infant deaths

in the United States. It is estimated that 150,000 babies will be born with a serious birth defect in 1998, and that one out of every five of these babies will die. In the United States, birth defects affect three percent of all births, and among the babies who survive, birth defects are a significant cause of lifelong challenges.

Depending on the particular type of problem and its severity, special medical treatment, education, rehabilitation and other services are usually required into adulthood, costing billions of dollars each year. A recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report indicated that the lifetime cost for just 18 common birth defects occurring in a single year is \$8 billion. However, only about 22 percent of those born with birth defects are included in these figures.

Birth defects can be reduced with a national strategy to direct the Centers for Disease Control to collect the information on birth defects, to provide funding and support in research at the State level and to set up regional centers to deal with birth defects as this legislation provides. We should strongly support the efforts of the Easter Seals Society, the American Hospital Association, and other organizations in developing and directing the Centers for Disease Control to work with States and local governments to survey birth defects and to bring together the information so that researchers can work to educate families about the challenges that are ahead for them. I know local groups, such as families with a child who has spina bifida can meet with other families and be a great source of strength and experience.

Mr. Speaker, S. 419 is good public policy and I encourage my colleagues to support the bill.

INTRODUCTION OF DISABLED CHILDREN'S FAIRNESS ACT OF 1998

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 12, 1998

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Disabled Children's Fairness Act of 1998. My bill will offer technical amendments to Title XVI of the Social Security Act to lessen the adverse impact of provisions in the federal welfare reform law that affect low income disabled children receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. The SSI Coalition for a Responsible Safety Net, a national advocacy organization, has endorsed the bill. I also want to thank Representatives WAXMAN and MARTINEZ for their support as original cosponsors.

My bill will reinstate the medical improvement test protection for low-income disabled children turning 18 who are subject to mandatory review of eligibility for SSI benefits under the federal welfare reform law. The amendment would require that before the Social Security Administration (SSA) could terminate

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