

devoted individuals, especially, to whom I pay tribute. Their caring and commitment to those in need is worthy of the highest praise and honor.

They have the gratitude of the community for their efforts in behalf of the less fortunate.

HONORING THE EAST SUBURBAN
YMCA CAMPAIGN

HON. RON KLINK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 1998

Mr. KLINK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the East Suburban YMCA of Pittsburgh and the contributions of the men and women who helped to expand this wonderful community institution. On March 22, 1998, they will be holding their Grand Re-Opening Celebration. The East Suburban YMCA has always provided opportunities for people to grow in mind, body and spirit and thanks to their most recent campaign, will continue to serve the community for many years to come.

The initial planning for the East Suburban YMCA was done in 1962 and it has remained a presence in the area for over 30 years. The YMCA strives to develop character and leadership through its programs and applies Christian values and principles to all relationships. The East Suburban YMCA serves men, women, boys and girls in the area through a wide variety of programs and facilities. Thanks to the efforts of numerous volunteers and supporters, the YMCA has touched the lives of many people in the community.

I would like to especially salute the group of dedicated individuals who made the East Suburban YMCA Campaign and the upcoming Grand Re-Opening possible. Allow me to first thank the Chairs of the Campaign, A. Richard Kacin and Myles D. Sampson. Their leadership meant so much to the effort. There were also many campaign workers and local donors that I would like to applaud: Claudia Abbondanti, John Beale, Gus Bondi, Lynne Bryan, Jim Cimino, Tim DeBiase, David Dubois, Eddie Edwards, Julius Jones, Alvin Kacin, Ann Klingler, Bud Kuhn, Carol Morris, Eric Lytle, Anthony M. Brusca Jr., State Representative Joseph F. Markosek, Mike McIntyre, Carolyn S. Mento, Mary Anne Norbeck, Margaret Osbourne, Pete Raspanti, Ben Sampson, David Vick, Charles Turner, David Yunov, and the late Jack Cummings. In addition to these fine examples of devoted and committed citizens, I would like to recognize the East Suburban YMCA Board of Management for their strong support of the campaign. The board members are Barbara Agostine, Kathleen Ballina, Dennis D. Dansak, Paul Dern, James End, Clyde Gallagher, Jeff Herbst, Chuck Leyh, Cheryl Lydiard, Gary Miller, Tony Naret, Lynn Pappo, Jeffrey Russo, Joe Sciallo, Steve Sebastian, Carol Siefken, Dan Taucher, and Annette Testa-Young. Additionally, I would like to recognize the YMCA staff, Paul Gelles, James Kapsalis, James Rumbaugh, Bud and Jo Sickler, State Representative Terry Van Horne, and the Honorable Paul Zavarella.

Mr. Speaker, I again want to applaud all of these people for their devotion to the East Suburban YMCA Campaign. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing their efforts

to improve and build upon the great legacy of service that the YMCA stands for.

OHIO HUNGER TOUR TRIP REPORT

HON. TONY P. HALL

OF OHIO

HON. DEBORAH PRYCE

OF OHIO

HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

HON. TED STRICKLAND

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 1998

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, we commend to our colleagues' attention the following report from a March 2-3, 1998 "hunger tour" of central and southeastern Ohio, in which we participated. The purpose of the trip was to investigate reports of increasing demand for emergency food at Ohio's food banks, pantries, and soup kitchens. We were surprised by what we found. Despite Ohio's strong economy, significant numbers of working poor and senior citizens are having great difficulty making ends meet, and are turning to charities to obtain adequate food. We encourage our colleagues to consider a similar tour in their own communities, to get a close-up view of the changing face of hunger, and the challenges facing the working poor and senior citizens in particular.

INTRODUCTION

Despite a booming economy, record low unemployment, a balanced federal budget, and unprecedented surpluses in many state coffers, there is mounting evidence of worsening hunger among the poorest Americans.

For more than a year now, foodbanks, pantries, and soup kitchens across Ohio and around the country have reported sharp increases in demand for emergency food, which are outstripping the charitable sector's capacity to respond to growing needs. A December, 1997 report by the U.S. Conference of Mayors found that demand for food relief was up by 16%. In January, 1998, my own informal survey of 200 of the nation's foodbanks revealed even sharper increases in hunger relief needs in many parts of the country. A September 1997 report by the U.S. Department of Agriculture found that in the Dayton area, one in eight people seek emergency food assistance every month.

To investigate such reports, and better understand the nature of this trend, I conducted a fact-finding mission to feeding programs in urban and rural Ohio communities from March 2-3, 1998. I was joined by my colleagues Representative DEBORAH PRYCE (OH-15th), Representative BOB NEY (OH-18th), Representative TED STRICKLAND (OH-6th) at site visits located in their districts. Ohio Senator MIKE DEWINE also was represented by an aide who accompanied the delegation for a full day.

Non-profit groups who supported the trip included the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks, the Ohio Food Policy & Anti-Poverty Action Center, and the Council for Economic Opportunities in Greater Cleveland, as well as individual foodbanks, pantries, and soup kitchens who hosted the delegation at stops in Columbus, Zanesville, Logan, MacArthur, and Dayton.

FINDINGS

What we saw and heard in the communities we visited strongly confirmed several emerging trends reported by foodbanks across Ohio and around the country:

Working people account for a large share of the increase in demand for emergency food, specifically people in low-wage and part-time jobs that offer few benefits and do not cover the cost of basic needs, including food.

Ohio is attempting to move over 148,000 households containing 386,239 persons from welfare to work over the next three years. The latest national data for December 1997 found that Ohio's twelve month growth in employment since December 1996 was 52,800 jobs, a slow growth rate of 1.0%. During the same period, Ohio lost 3,900 manufacturing jobs. New job growth has been in service sector employment, which generally paying minimum or just above minimum wage with few or no medical benefits. Despite a robust economy and an abundance of low-wage jobs in Columbus and other urban centers, significant pockets of joblessness and high unemployment persist in the more economically depressed parts of the state's Appalachian region.

The delegation visited the Southeastern Ohio Foodbank, which provides food to local charities in one of the poorest and most economically depressed areas of the state. In three of the nine counties served by that foodbank, between 40% and 50% of the people requesting emergency food were working full or part-time. In Meigs county, more than half of the people seeking emergency food assistance were working.

Not one person we spoke with did not want to work, and all expressed their shame and frustration at having to resort to foodbanks to put food on the table at the end of the month. One woman explained: "My children get excited to see food coming into the house—kids should get excited about toys, and circuses, and special treats, not the food we need to feed our family." According to the pantry director in MacArthur, Ohio, a rare job opening for a clerking position at a video store recently drew more than 100 applicants. Highest on that pantry's wish list were buses to transport people to minimum-wage jobs in Columbus.

At the Franklinton Food Pantry, the largest pantry in Franklin County, where more than 11,000 people seek food assistance each month, over 60% of all households in the community have incomes below \$15,000 per year (well below the \$16,050 poverty line for a family of four). A visit to the home of one food pantry client belied the common stereotype that people seeking charitable assistance are lazy freeloaders. Here was a couple with strong faith and family values, struggling to keep their family of seven together. Like many Ohio working families, for these people the pantry is no longer an emergency food source, but a regular part of their monthly coping and budgeting process to keep their family from going hungry. Their net income of \$600 every two weeks barely affords a food budget of \$100 a week, which must stretch to feed five teenagers (two of them taken in from a troubled family member). Their coping mechanisms include purchasing low-cost food, limiting the types of food they consume, and once a month getting food from the local food pantry, which helps feed the family "between pay checks." Such families have no cushion against unexpected expenses, such as major

car repairs, illnesses, or high heating bills in unusually cold months.

Elderly people on fixed incomes are resorting to food pantries and soup kitchens in growing numbers. They frequently cite the cost of medical care and prescriptions as competing with their limited food budgets.

At various stops on the tour, we repeatedly heard about the dilemma seniors face when their monthly Social Security checks are eaten up by medical fees and prescriptions, leaving little money for food. As we approached a MacArthur, Ohio food pantry, we observed a line of nearly 1,200 people, mostly senior citizens, waiting along the road to receive a box of food. Inside the pantry, clergy and church volunteers serving this crowd described deplorable living conditions—run-down shacks with no heat or running water, dilapidated trailers with holes in the floor, even chicken coops and buses. We repeatedly heard that their pride and the stigma of accepting charity keep many seniors from asking for help until their situation is truly desperate. As one nun told us, “we know we are really in trouble when the elderly start showing up at pantries in large numbers.”

Part of the “traditional” clientele at food pantries and soup kitchens are those for whom hunger is a symptom of deeper problems—illiteracy, a lack of education, a history of substance or domestic abuse, mental illness, or homelessness. It will be difficult if not impossible for many of these individuals to compete in the job market without intensive rehabilitation, and some of them may never be able to hold jobs.

Everyone who has ever volunteered at a soup kitchen knows these faces—people who may never have been able to hold a job, and are not counted in unemployment data because they are unemployable or have given up trying to find work. This described many of the people we met at the Zanesville soup kitchen we visited—people who have “failed to thrive” and live life on the margins for one reason or another. As one volunteer put it, “with the right kind of help, some of these people may be able to pull themselves up by their boot straps, but a lot of them never had boots to begin with.” And, in the words of a food pantry director, “I am tired of selectively talking about the types of clients we serve, so that people will care. Some of these people are plain old poor folks, who’ve had a hard time getting it together for whatever reason. But they still need to eat.”

Churches and charitable food assistance agencies are doing their best to rise to the challenge of growing demands, but their capacity is overwhelmed by the increased need they are now facing.

In attempts to meet increased needs, every church group and private charity we spoke with had stepped up efforts to raise additional funds through church collections, food drives, pie sales, and appeals to businesses and other donors. Yet, in many cases pantries report having to reduce the amount of food they distribute, or turn people away for lack of food. A Zanesville soup kitchen reported taking out a bank loan for the first time ever last year, to cover operating costs. Within the last year the number of food relief agencies serving the hungry in Ohio reportedly declined by 23% as many closed or consolidated with other operations.

CONCLUSIONS

Our limited sampling of sites serving hungry people, and discussions with charitable food providers, state officials, and advocacy groups, provided only a snapshot of the conditions that are underlying the increases in requests for relief that foodbanks, soup kitchens and pantries are reporting. Yet it confirmed to us, in clear and human terms, disturbing evidence that more of our citizens than ever are vulnerable to hunger, despite a robust economy.

As states work to replace the federal welfare system with structures of their own, the number of people turning to food banks for emergency assistance is growing. New strategies are being tried, many with success, and they need to be encouraged. Food banks have been doing the hard work on the front lines of fighting hunger for decades. They are supported by their communities, and they are the organizations that increasing numbers of citizens turn to for help. But to ensure that Americans who turn to food banks for help do not go hungry, food banks need additional support.

They need the goodwill and charitable contributions of their community, and the participation of more individuals and businesses.

They need public and private initiatives that complement their efforts and address the root causes of hunger and poverty.

They need jobs that pay a living wage and laws that encourage generosity and charitable giving.

And they cannot do without the significant support of federal funds and federal commodity foods.

The job of the federal government was not finished when the welfare reform bill was enacted. Congress and the Administration have a responsibility to monitor what the states are doing, to measure how the poor are faring, and to make adjustments as necessary as problems arise.

Even as we give policy reforms a chance to work and aggressively attack the underlying problems that make people vulnerable to hunger, we cannot stand by and watch growing numbers of Americans go hungry. If, as the evidence suggests, increasing numbers of people are so hungry they’re willing to stand in line for food, we cannot rest knowing that, too often, there is no food at the end of that line.

HONORING GENERAL RAYMOND G. DAVIS

HON. MAC COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 1998

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the American Legion on the occasion of the 79th Anniversary of its founding and to pay homage to General Raymond G. Davis, Medal of Honor recipient and retired Assistant Commandant of the United States Marine Corps. I recently had the honor of introducing General Davis as the keynote speaker at the recent birthday celebration of the Clayton County American Post 258. I enter those remarks in the Congressional Record in honor of the American Legion and General Ray Davis.

THE HONORABLE MAC COLLINS 79TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICAN LEGION CLAYTON COUNTY AMERICAN LEGION POST 258, MARCH 13, 1998, JONESBORO, GEORGIA

Good evening. It is a real pleasure to be with so many friends here tonight. Thank you Lamar Miller for your kind introductory remarks and for giving me the honor of introducing General Ray Davis, our distinguished speaker this evening. I also want to recognize Clayton County Sheriff Stanley Tuggle, State Representative Greg Hecht, and State Representative Frank Bailey and his wife, Frances. I have known and respected Frank for many years. He is a friend and does a fine job for the people of Clayton County in the Georgia House of Representatives.

And, I want to recognize Mr. James Hugh Lindsey. I had the pleasure of first meeting Mr. Lindsey at a celebration arranged by Mr. Miller on the occasion of his 101st birthday. Mr. Lindsey recently celebrated his 102nd birthday, and I know everyone here this evening joins with me in wishing him many more to come.

We are here tonight to celebrate and honor the 79th anniversary of the founding of the American Legion. When Mr. Miller told me tonight’s dinner was being held to celebrate the founding of the American Legion, I wanted to learn more about the rich history of your organization.

It all began in March 1919 when members of the American Expeditionary Force in Europe held the first caucus in Paris and created an organization for those who have served their country. The official name for the Legion was adopted in May 1919 at a caucus meeting in St. Louis. In September 1919, the organization was officially chartered by the United States Congress. And, in November 1919, the Legion held its first annual convention in Minneapolis where its members adopted the organization’s constitution and set its future course.

From that handful of soldiers in Paris and the founding members at the first convention in Minneapolis, the American Legion today has grown to over 2.9 million members. The programs you sponsor and support touch the lives of so many of your fellow citizens. You are helping to mold the hearts and minds of our nation’s youth with your work with the Boy Scouts of America, your sponsorship of Boys State and Boys Nation, American Legion Baseball, your educational scholarship programs, the Child Welfare Foundation, your Children and Youth Programs and many, many more.

Through your Citizens Flag Alliance, the Legion is working to “protect our history, our pride, our honor and our flag.” And, the American Legion provides valuable input to Congress in writing and passing laws that protect our national security and enhance the lives of all who have served their country. As a Member of Congress, I thank you and your fellow Legionnaires for all that you have given, and continue to give, to your nation.

While I could continue speaking on the wonderful history of the Legion, it is my honor to introduce your keynote speaker who, I believe, best represents the ideals on which the American Legion was founded and for which it stands today. Raymond G. Davis is a son of Georgia. He was born on January 13, 1915 in Fitzgerald, the son of Zelma and Raymond Roy Davis. Following his 1938 graduation from Georgia School of Technology with Honors, Ray Davis began a 33-year career with the United States Marine Corps as a second lieutenant.

During that distinguished career, Ray Davis rose from the rank of second lieutenant to become a four-star general and Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps. While