

I'd like to thank the Food Research and Action Center for their support and tireless efforts to increase the reach and scope of programs like Summer Food Service. And I encourage my colleagues to continue our work on this issue. I think there is a lot more we can do for these kids. The Summer Food Service Program is one of the least known and most underutilized of the federal nutrition programs. There is no reason for so many children to be hungry and under-nourished during the summer when we could increase participation in the program by offering one-time grants to help more sponsors get started.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for H.R. 3874, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Amendments of 1998.

I have always been a strong supporter of WIC because it gives women and young children access to the foods necessary for healthy development. WIC provides specific nutritious foods to at-risk, income-eligible, pregnant, postpartum and breast feeding women, infants and children up to five years of age. WIC gives women and young children the means to obtain highly nutritious foods like iron-fortified infant formula, calcium-rich milk, eggs, juice, and cereal.

During pregnancy, one of the most fragile periods in a woman's life, WIC enhances dietary intake, which improves weight gain and the likelihood of a successful pregnancy. After birth, WIC continues to promote the health of infants and is responsible for reducing low birth weight and infant mortality. Children who participate in WIC receive immunizations against childhood diseases at a higher rate than children who are not WIC participants. WIC also helps to reduce anemia among children.

As we know, children receiving nutritious meals are in a better position to focus on their daily studies. Proper nutrition is an integral part of our children's educational experience. In fact, WIC has been linked to improved cognitive development among children. WIC children are more prepared to learn compared to those children who lack proper nutritionally balanced diets.

In short, WIC is supported by many people and continues to be a popular program. It yields tremendous returns on our investments and improves the health and well being of pregnant women, infants and children. I urge my colleagues to show their support for the WIC Program by voting in favor of H.R. 3874.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak on this important issue. I support this bill which will guarantee that families are able to access the food they need. In addition, this program will extend funding for state school lunch programs and provide low income families' children with a national food program.

H.R. 3874 reauthorizes this program through 2003 to allow the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition program provides nutrition, education and supplemental food to low-income pregnant and post-partum women, infants and children up to age five. These necessary services are provided free of charge to eligible individuals and families. This bill also contains a number of other provisions including ones that extend funding for administration expenses for the State school lunch program and reauthorize a national summer food program for children of low income families.

In my own homestate of Texas, in the 18th Congressional District, a total of 109,596 women, infants and children receive WIC services each month. This means that in Harris County, TX 12,917 pregnant women, 5,259 breast feeding mothers, 9,448 postpartum mothers, how have recently given birth, and 29,934 infants, and 52,038 children can receive the help that they need. One-seventh of the State of Texas' 683,000 WIC recipients reside in Harris County, TX.

This program is not as glamorous as others—the WIC program is formula, milk, juice, and bread. The majority of those served are poor infants and children, those who are most often overlooked. To cut the WIC program does not materially reduce the numbers of women, infants and children who are in need. This program is one of the best run, most efficient and effective programs that the Federal Government has initiated.

According to the Government Accounting Office, for every dollar spent on the WIC program the tax payer saves \$3.50. This is the reason the WIC Program received very strong bi-partisan support throughout its history.

We must continue to support this program. What can be more important than making sure our country's children are healthy and safe? I strongly support this bill and I encourage my colleagues to support it as well.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GOODLING) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3874, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. GOODLING. 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. GOODLING. 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. 3874.

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

There was no objection.

#### SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND EXPANSION OF HOMEOWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 208) expressing the sense of the Congress regarding access to affordable housing and expansion of homeownership opportunities.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 208

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of the Congress that—*

(1) the priorities of our Nation should include providing access to affordable housing that is safe, clean, and healthy and expanding homeownership opportunities; and

(2) these goals should be pursued through policies that—

(A) promote the ability of the private sector to produce affordable housing without excessive government regulation;

(B) encourage tax incentives, such as the mortgage interest deduction, at all levels of government; and

(C) facilitate the availability of capital for homeownership and housing production, including by continuing the essential roles carried out by the Federal National Mortgage Association, the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, and the Federal Home Loan Banks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH).

(Mr. LEACH asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, this, I believe, is a non-controversial bill. It underscores principles critical to the American family—the desirability of achieving the dream of home ownership for as many Americans as conceivably possible.

On this front, there is some good news, and also some challenging circumstances. The good news is that home ownership is going up in America, almost 1 percent in the last 4 years, until today it reaches approximately 66 percent of the American public. The principal reason for this relates to lower interest rates caused by restrained monetary policy and the movement from a deficit to a surplus fiscal policy.

It also relates to aspects of tax policy, the importance of quasi-governmental institutions like Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac that have served as extraordinarily helpful intermediaries in housing finance, and to certain housing programs of the Federal Government itself.

But what this bill, and it is a small bill, does is simply underscore what are the great principles of American housing, and underscore it in such a way as to make it clear that this Congress is not going to be backed down from those principles, particularly the principle that relates to the interest deduction for home ownership mortgage loans.

Mr. Speaker, recognizing that this is an exceptionally modest bill, but also one that relates to a subject very important to the heart of the American people, I would urge its adoption at this time.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. MINGE).

Mr. MINGE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I have faced repeated requests from communities that I represent for action at the Federal level to