permitting States to decide whether to use Medicaid funds for abortions in the case of rape or incest.

This provision is cruel, unfair, and has no place in any legislation, but most particularly not in this already troubled omnibus appropriations bill.

States should not be given the option of providing coverage of these services under the guise of States' rights. States have the choice whether or not to participate in the Medicaid Program—they do not and should not have the option to pick and choose which procedures they will cover.

The provision in this bill clearly discriminates against victims of crime. It blames the victim and forces her to accept the responsibility and consequences resulting from the violent crime perpetrated against her. Indigent women who are victims of rape or incest have already been brutally assaulted once by their attacker—this provision will make them victims of a second brutal assault, this time by the Government that pledges to assist and protect them.

I urge my colleagues to protect the rights of poor and vulnerable victims and vote ''yes'' on the Lowey amendment.

CONGRATULATIONS ON 25 SUCCESSFUL YEARS

HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 12, 1996

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor any friends at Southfield Christian School on their 25th anniversary celebration.

With a deep-seated commitment to a strong program of moral and character development, Southfield Christian has set new standards for excellence among Christian schools.

In fact, Southfield Christian was one of only two schools nationally to receive the prestigious Blue Ribbon Exemplary School Award from the U.S. Department of Education.

With a program emphasizing both academic excellence and a commitment to developing character and integrity, Southfield Christian has a solid track record of success.

More than 75 percent of their student body achieves honor roll status. The annual college acceptance average is over 95 percent and, in last year's senior class, 99 percent were accepted to colleges. And finally, nearly 77 percent of the students at Southfield Christian score nationally in the top quarter on national standardized tests.

Not only are they academically outstanding, the school and its student body is involved in the local community as well. The annual fall drive for the needy yielded more than 800 winter coats, hundreds of cans of food and more than 7,000 quarters—in honor of their 25th anniversary—for the purchase of children's Bibles.

With state-of-the-art facilities and a loyal, committed alumni, the future looks very bright for the next 25 years and beyond.

Strengthened by their commitment and resolve to install morals and values in our future leaders, I extend my heartiest congratulations on your 25th anniversary. I am very proud of Southfield Christian, their staff, and the student body. Keep up the great work.

SPEAKER PRINGLE'S STRAIGHT TALK ON WELFARE REFORM

HON. GEORGE P. RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 12, 1996

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, President Clinton has talked a good game on welfare reform, particularly when the cameras were focused on him during the State of the Union Address. But his two vetoes of welfare reform legislation speak much louder than his crowd-pleasing rhetoric. As we, in Congress, continue to pursue an overhaul of the current system, the California legislature has moved ahead with its own welfare reform legislation, designed to restore work incentives and help people on welfare become independent and productive citizens.

The speaker of the assembly, Curt Pringle, has been a leader in California's welfare reform effort. In the March 4, Los Angeles Times, Speaker Pringle correctly pointed out that President Clinton, far from being a leader in welfare reform, is actually its major impediment. California and the other States cannot reform their welfare programs without Federal approval. If President Clinton had approved the legislation sent to him by the 104th Congress, California would not have to go through an extremely difficult and time-consuming Federal waiver process in order to implement its own reforms. California could be moving forward with its reforms right now.

Given the continued urgency of this issue, I would like to request that Speaker Pringle's excellent commentary be entered into the RECORD at this point.

[From the Los Angeles Times, March 4, 1996]

CLINTON ISN'T DOING CALIFORNIA'S POOR ANY FAVORS

(By Curt Pringle)

President Clinton said, ''I believe we should ship decision-making responsibility and resources from bureaucracies in Washington to communities, to states and, where we can, directly to individuals.'' When he makes statements like that about welfare reform, does he seriously expect us to believe him any more?

Since his campaign pledge in 1992 to end welfare, the president has blocked every serious reform effort presented. Last year he vetoed important congressional block grant legislation, for which he had earlier indicated support, which would have given state and local governments more flexibility and control over reform efforts. And last week before a Senate panel, Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala announced that the president will reject the National Governors Assn.'s bipartisan plan to salvage welfare reform this year.

The president's words of reform offer up hope, but his actions betray us at our most desperate hour.

California, like so many states, is hurting. Our social fabric is being ripped apart by federal welfare programs that discourage work, deprive citizens of self-respect and dignity, create long-term intergenerational dependency and compromise the well-being of our children. After $5.4 trillion spent over the last 30 years for social welfare, we now realize that the federal government's failed ''war on poverty'' has actually been a war on the values of its own citizens.

We must replace the welfare system in California immediately, before we lose another generation of poor children. Unfortunately, the Clinton administration is standing in our way.

In July 1994, California passed commonsense ''family cap'' welfare reform legislation to end the perverse practice of increasing payments to welfare recipients who have additional children. This practice usurps the role of husbands and drives men away from their families. But officials at the federal Department of Health and Human Services have denied the necessary federal waiver that would allow California to implement its law.

Our citizens are being held hostage by the federal welfare system, and there is nothing we can do about it.

How can we possibly move Californians into the work force when federal welfare programs pay them the equivalent of $11.59 an hour not to work? That's 270% more than they can earn with a full-time, minimum-wage job. And how can we discourage teenage girls from getting pregnant and dropping out of school when Washington tells them that for as long as they don't work, don't get married and don't live at home, the government will provide them with free money, free food and a free apartment?

We must take matters into our own hands. California will soon pass the most sweeping welfare reform legislation in the nation's history. The plan will replace the current welfare system with temporary assistance that focuses on reuniting broken families and moving the abled-bodied back into jobs.

The plan also removes disincentives to marriage, work and self-responsibility by establishing flat grants, no higher than minimum wage, that do not increase according to family size. After all, it is unfair to tax low-income working mothers whose wages are not based on family size and use the money to subsidize welfare recipients who choose to have more children. Fairness and self-reliance will be the cornerstones of California's new welfare system.

But without federal approval, these reforms cannot be implemented.

The president says that states must be given more flexibility to do the things they want to without seeking waivers. But by blocking reform efforts in Washington, the president has proved again that he cannot be trusted.

California must be allowed to implement its welfare reform measures without seeking waivers.

We will fight destructive federal welfare programs all the way to the Supreme Court if necessary, until out citizens and families can once again set their own course for opportunity.

TRIBUTE TO JOEL VATTENDAHL

HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 12, 1996

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my friend, Mr. Joel Vattendahl, who retired from the United Steelworkers of America in December 1995.

Throughout his career, Joel worked tirelessly on behalf of the working men and women of Wisconsin. Joel's career in the labor movement began in 1965 when he was appointed staff representative with the United Steelworkers. In 1981, he was elected to the position of director of United Steelworkers District 32. Joel effectively served in this position until June 1995. He announced his retirement in December 1995.