

The Virtual Tour provides people from all over the country, and indeed from around the world, an opportunity to visit the U.S. Senate via the World Wide Web. Information provided can be used to learn more about the U.S. Capitol, as well as to plan for tours of the Senate.

From panoramic views of the Senate Chamber to a zoomed-in focus on the President's chair in the Old Senate Chamber, visitors to the Virtual Tour will experience the history of the Capitol Building and its famous rooms, as well as the richness of our country's heritage through artwork, statues, and sculptures that reflect the diversity of our Nation. The Virtual Tour currently has four rooms of the Senate available: the Senate Chamber, the Old Senate Chamber, the Old Supreme Court, and the President's room. Descriptions of important events associated with each room are provided with the graphics. Additional rooms are planned to be added on a monthly basis.

I encourage my fellow Senators to let their constituents know about the Virtual Tour. This is a resource meant to be shared with the public and enjoyed by all.

Finally, I would like to thank the following staff from the offices of the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, the Senate Sergeant at Arms, the Secretary of the Senate, the Clerk of the House, and the Architect of the Capitol for their hard work and effort in planning, developing, and making the Virtual Tour of the Senate a reality: Cheri Allen, Chuck Badal, Richard Baker, Trent Coleman, Michael Dunn, Lisa Farmer, Wayne Firth, Charlie Kaiman, Betty Koed, Christopher Lee, Megan Lucas, Thomas Meenan, Heather Moore, Steve Payne, Brian Raines, Diane Skvarla, Ray Strong, Scott Strong, David Wall, and Wendy Wolff.

HUNGER IN AMERICA

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the important issue of hunger in America. We often hear about hunger as a global problem affecting many people every day. Many in our own country warn us of a growing hunger problem in America.

One of my Minnesota constituents, Dr. Joseph Ioffe, is a former Russian professor of economics and challenges this thinking from his first hand knowledge of hunger in Russia. He has written an editorial that suggests our real problem is one that involves the quality of diet for low-income families rather than starvation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Dr. Ioffe's article be printed in the RECORD.

IS THERE REALLY HUNGER IN AMERICA

(By Joseph Ioffe)

Another day, another letter in my mailbox from public organizations fighting hunger in America. And every letter is overloaded with general statements and emotional appeals but lacks facts and specifics.

Here is one from Larry Jones, president of Feed The Children, an Oklahoma City-based organization: "I am writing on behalf of a very special group that faces death every hour of every day of the year. It is the 15 million hungry children in the United States. Every 53 minutes a hungry child dies." A horrible picture—it looks like Rwanda or North Korea. Hard to believe that the U.S. government is providing food aid to many other countries while letting millions of its own people starve to death.

So I wrote a letter to Jones, asking him for specifics and, in particular, to furnish the names and addresses, at random, of children who died from starvation, say, last year. As it appeared from Jones' response, he personally had never witnessed such cases, never kept any records of the victims of hunger, but relied on statistics from other organizations.

After all, he said, his mission was not in studying facts about hunger but raising money for children who, he believed, were starving in the U.S.—which he has been doing for years by hitting mailboxes all around the country.

So I decided to go to the source Jones referred to. In a publication by the Children's Defense Fund, a Washington, DC-based public organization, I found the numbers but defined differently: 15 million children living in poverty . . . every 53 minutes a child dies from poverty. . . . It appeared that Jones did not just borrow the statistics from CDF but adjusted it to the purpose of his own understanding.

Poverty does not necessarily mean hunger. In the U.S. the poverty lines is set up fairly high. Suffice it to say that a family living at the poverty level in America has a higher income than the median income of the same size family in 150 other countries throughout the world including Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

But let us put aside the difference between hunger and poverty. The point is that the CDF "death from poverty" statistics were unfounded as well. The official mortality statistics are based on the records of hospitals, and do not operate with such cause of death as "poverty."

So any responsible statement about children dying from poverty is supposed to be supported and substantiated by special studies establishing the link between medical and social causes. Nothing like that could be found in the CDF publications. Small wonder that my requests for information of this kind was just ignored by CDF.

And here is another letter, this one from Christine Vladimiroff, president of Second Harvest, a food bank network based in Chicago; "Tonight millions of Americans won't get enough to eat . . ." Again, no specifics about numbers, not the slightest attempt to prove that is real. Instead, attached to the letter was a picture of the Statute of Liberty holding the "Will work for food" poster, it was ridiculous.

Those men and women with such posters on the busy city streets, idlers and drifters, don't care about work and food at all. They are just playing a trick on compassionate motorists. At the red light, the motorists reach out for their pocket-books and hand out a dollar or two to the "hungry" guys. None of them has ever accepted any offer to work. But their day's "work" with the poster usually brings in \$100 or more and the money is being spent, right away, for drugs and alcohol.

As for food, they get it at the soup kitchens. In the 30's soup kitchens served real hungry people, victims of the bad economic situation. Nowadays in America they are mostly a feeding place for people of anti-social behavior like idlers, drifters, drug abusers

and alcoholics. Now the old saying, "he who does not work, does not eat." is out of date.

So is there hunger in America. It is common knowledge that the U.S. is the world leader in food production, that the food prices, in relation to the wages, are the lowest, that the food stamps program combined with free distribution of basic nutritional products from the state reserves for the low-income families provides a safeguard against any threat of hunger in America. Nobody is starving in this country, and, moreover, nobody is dying from starvation.

The real problem is not feeding the hungry but improving the quality of the daily diet of the low-income families, extending their diet beyond a certain number of plain products and bringing it, gradually, to the modern nutritional standards. That is where the efforts of the charitable organizations should be directed.

Those ambitious activities who are trying to impress the public with sensations and high drama, talking about millions of starving Americans facing death, don't do any good to the country.

BAILEY "USE OR CARRY" FIREARMS BILL, S. 191

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I rise to hail the passage last night of the Bailey Fix Act, also known as the use or carry bill, after two Congresses. This legislation will provide enhanced mandatory minimum penalties for those criminals who use guns while trafficking in drugs or in the commission of violent crimes. When the Supreme Court handed down its decision in Bailey versus United States in 1995, the Court dealt a serious blow to law enforcement. Prior to that decision, drug traffickers who "used or carried" firearms during or in relation to their drug trafficking crimes were subject to mandatory minimums of five years under Section 924(c) of Title 18. With this decision, the Court significantly limited prosecutors' ability to put gun-using, drug trafficking criminals away.

In Bailey, the Supreme Court, in a unanimous decision, announced that in order to receive the sentence enhancement for using or carrying a firearm during a violent or drug trafficking crime under Title 18 U.S.C. 924(c), the criminal must "actively employ" a firearm. This decision severely restricted an important tool used by federal prosecutors to put gun-using drug criminals behind bars. According to the U.S. Sentencing Commission, there were 9,182 defendants sentenced nationwide from 1991 to 1995 under 924(c). The Commission notes that the vast majority, about 75% of these cases are drug trafficking and bank robbery cases. Since the Bailey decision, the number of federal cases involving a 924(c) enhancement has declined by about 17%.

The question before this Congress for almost four years, two Senate hearings, and seven bills was how to restore this crime fighting tool. Across the political spectrum there is a consensus about the problem. There is also a consensus, I believe, that the purpose of this "use or carry" provision is twofold; to punish criminals who use guns,