

more children and families will get high quality services, and no House family will be worse off. This new policy, then, will produce lots of winners and no losers."

It seems to me that a Child Care Center closely associated with the place of work is a winner to begin with, but it also must be financially viable. The step that we take with this bill today ensures indeed that we will continue to be winners.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

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

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, this is a good bill, a timely bill, and hopefully every Member will support it. The House is indeed fortunate to have such an excellent Child Care Center. At present, Mr. Speaker, the center is open only to children of employees of the legislative branch, with Members and employees of the House having priority. Numerous Members and staff have entrusted their children to the center over the years. My own granddaughter Judy, as a matter of fact, when my daughter was working here was at the Child Care Center and she was enriched immeasurably by that experience. The House Child Care Center is a wonderful place, and I wish there were many more like it for parents across the country who desperately need safe, reliable, high quality child care.

The House center, which occupies space in the Ford House Office Building, receives no direct appropriations. Except for its space, utilities and benefits for its staff who are House employees, the center must sustain itself through its tuitions. Like many child care centers, the House center has difficulty filling all its places for 3- and 4-year-olds. There is a long waiting list, Mr. Speaker, for infants and strong demand for places for 1- and 2-year-olds. This is because new working parents without family-based child care alternatives often find few options for child care outside the home. However, as children approach the school age, other options become available to many parents. These options may include free or low cost public preschool programs. Parents may enroll in prekindergarten programs that virtually assure later acceptance in a particular school. The arrival of younger siblings may render it more economical for one parent to stay home or to hire a nanny to care for children in the home, if that is financially possible. For child care centers, the loss of 3- and 4-year-olds, who are the most profitable since child-to-adult ratios can be higher, has a great effect on the bottom line.

This legislation will ease this problem for the House center by expanding the population it can serve to include employees of other Federal agencies. The center will continue to give first

priority to children of the House, then to other legislative branch children. If places remain, however, available thereafter, it will then be offered to children of other Federal employees. This is a sensible move that will make the House center more efficient. It will ease the upward pressure on the center's tuition rates which are already frankly beyond the reach of many House employees. Equally important, it will make the benefits of the House Child Care Center available to Federal employees throughout the Washington region. There are undoubtedly numerous Federal workers across this area who would appreciate the chance to enroll their children in the House Child Care Center. We should certainly offer them placements in our center that would otherwise go unfilled, and that is the key. We are simply providing for vacant spaces being available. We will not in any way compete with the House employees.

Mr. Speaker, by strengthening the House Child Care Center, this bill is good for the House and other legislative branch employees who need child care. By expanding the eligible population to include all Federal employees, it is good for Federal workers in this area and the government generally. I certainly rise in strong support of this legislation and ask for an affirmative vote.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bill, H.R. 3122 that allows federal employees who do not work for the legislative branch to enroll their children in the House of Representatives Child Care Center. Every parent that works for the federal government should have access to quality child care.

Child care is critical to the success of working families and to ensuring that every child enters school ready to learn. The need for child care has become a necessity for many parents.

It is estimated that 65 percent of women with children younger than six, and 78 percent of women with children between the ages of six and 17 are in the work force. Almost 60 percent of the women with infants are also in the work force. The majority of working women provide half or more of their family's income.

Every day, 13 million preschoolers, including six million babies and toddlers are in child care. Children enter child care programs as early as six weeks of age.

Quality child care has a lasting impact on children's well-being and ability to learn. Poor quality child care can result in delayed language and reading skills.

Many parents struggle to find affordable, quality child care because of the high costs. Full day care costs as much as \$4000 to \$10,000 per year—close to the cost of one year of public college tuition.

The Child Care Center that serves the House of Representatives is a high quality center that currently benefits the children of employees of the House. This center offers the quality services that parents need, and this center should be made available for other employees of the Federal government.

I urge my Colleagues to support this measure. All children deserve quality care early in

life for a healthy start this bill will make these services available for more working families.

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

Mr. THOMAS. 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 California (Mr. THOMAS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3122.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1500

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of H.R. 3122, the bill just passed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOODLATTE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF 4-H CLUBS

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 194) recognizing the contributions of 4-H Clubs and their members to voluntary community service.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 194

Whereas the American people have a tradition of philanthropy and volunteerism;

Whereas 4-H Clubs, an organization originally established by the Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture and land-grant colleges, provide young people in the United States with the opportunity to actively participate in volunteer services in their communities that can bridge the differences that separate people and help solve social problems;

Whereas there are more than 6,500,000 youth members of 4-H Clubs in the United States;

Whereas 4-H members touch and enhance the lives of others during the annual National 4-H Week and throughout the year by doing good, by giving where there is a need, by rebuilding what has been torn down, by teaching where there is a desire to learn, and by inspiring those who have lost hope;

Whereas 4-H Clubs and their members, as well as other volunteers and Cooperative Extension staff, have joined to promote the week of October 3 through 9, 1999, as an opportunity for national, collaborated voluntary community service; and

Whereas voluntary community service is an investment in the future all Americans must share: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring). That the Congress commends and recognizes 4-H Clubs and their members in the United States for their contributions to voluntary community service.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from