

CHILDREN ARE BEING NEGLECTED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) to speak about the provision of the welfare bill which takes away the rights for education and training so people can move up and out of the welfare rolls. Other than that, it sounds like some form of regressive slavery.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding. That is very much a part of the pattern of contempt I have observed in this bill. We say we want to put Americans to work and off welfare, meaning the mothers of the children. Yet there is a prohibition against higher education in the present law. You cannot go into a junior college or community college to get an associate degree. That is where the jobs are, the technician jobs that pay a decent salary, offer steady and continuous work with fringe benefits, and a health care plan. But no, we will not allow a welfare mother to use, to go into a higher education program.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have been elected for 20 years, 10 years in this House, and in that time period I have seen all kinds of welfare. The bill we passed last year, \$94 billion to the farmers, the percentage of the farmers is 2 percent of the population. I have got to ask the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) because I do not know exactly what percentage will the wealthiest farmers get out the farmers' welfare bill.

Mr. OWENS. If the gentlewoman would continue to yield, it is a safety net program. It was started the same time that Franklin Roosevelt started the Aid to Families with Dependent Children. They were poor farmers at that time, but now a farmer may get as much as \$390,000 per year, and you may participate in the program even if your income is \$2.5 million.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, and I think the gentlewoman is right, the farm bill was far too generous to too few wealthy big farmers. Actually 2 percent of the people farm, that is correct. And of those who get resources, 20 percent of the farmers get 80 percent of the resources, so the vast majority of the farmers do not get what my colleague thinks.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, if the gentlewoman would yield, that means that the poor farmers are not getting this safety net benefit for the poor. I think this is relevant because now that we are on Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Act, suddenly our colleagues have become frugal. Suddenly they want to become responsible and prove to the public that they are here to protect the treasury. We have already given it away to people who need it the least, and now we are neglecting needy children in our society.

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I held up this picture earlier, and this is Rile-ya Wilson has been missing in the State of Florida for 15 months. Now we are talking about super block granting the money to the State where we have no accountability. In Florida, we have close to 800,000 children living below the poverty line. That is 22 percent of all of the children in Florida. The kids in Florida have double jeopardy.

First of all, we have a President that has given away \$500 billion and wants to make it permanent as tax breaks to the richest people in this country, and then we have a governor in the State of Florida that gives the rest of the money away to the businesses. And yet the State of Florida, the average worker that takes care of these kids does not make \$20,000 a year, and they have a roll of between 40 and 100 kids that they have to look after.

The Republicans are very, very good with gimmicks. They have Leave No Child Behind, a slogan they stole from the Children's Defense Fund. What does that mean? This is the time we need to look at leaving no child behind; but are we doing that? No, no. We are talking about we cannot afford to take care of our children, but we can afford to take care of everybody else but the children. They talk a great talk, but they do not walk the walk.

Mr. Speaker, there are two words to describe what's wrong with this welfare bill—Rile-ya Wilson. Right now, there is a 5-year-old child from my State missing somewhere in this country because Congress wants to give full responsibility to underfunded State agencies without any Federal oversight. These super blocks grants allow the States to neglect our children.

Let's look at my State of Florida for an example of what happens when States don't take care of our children. There are over 775,000 children living below the poverty line in Florida—a staggering 22 percent of all children in the State. The welfare rolls have gone down, but, not surprisingly, this number has not improved; 77 percent of our fourth graders' reading skills are not up to speed. And although almost 20 percent of our children do not have any health insurance, Florida had to return over \$30 million in Federal funds for the Children's Health Insurance Program in 1998 because the State did not want to match the money.

It is truly an outrage that we today have to debate how much money to dedicate to helping our weakest and most vulnerable as the President and the Republican leadership wants to permanently extend tax cuts to the richest in our country to the tune of \$500 billion just in this decade and \$4 trillion in the next!

And worse, the children in Florida are doubly penalized because our Governor decided to spend the State's money on wealthy businesses instead of making sure the state can account for all of its children.

Our priorities are all wrong when the average worker at the Department of Children and Families in my State makes less than \$20,000 a year and handles over 70 cases at a time.

It is time that we start to think of the children first. What happened to "Leave no Child

Behind"? The Republicans can come up with lots of catchy slogans, but I've got one for you: Where's the beef? The Republican bill does nothing to improve the state of children in this country. The Republicans want welfare recipients to work 40 hours a week, but where is the money for childcare? This bill does not allow parents to receive education in order to end the cycle of poverty that they find themselves in. They need an education to get a good job to stay off the welfare rolls.

The proof is in the pudding. Don't just talk the talk—walk the walk! Instead of trying to make people all around the country go running to the altar to get married, we need to be making sure that the States are equipped to take care of our children. We cannot have any more tragic cases occur like the one of Rile-ya Wilson.

MUSHARRAF'S FAILURE TO ROOT OUT TERRORISM IN KASHMIR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I come to the House floor this evening to reiterate once again that President Musharraf of Pakistan is failing to root out terrorism in Kashmir.

This past Tuesday, more than 30 Indian soldiers and members of their families fell victim to a deadly attack in Kashmir at the hands of three Pakistani-based militants.

Mr. Speaker, this type of terrorism is tragic and is exactly the type of terrorist activity that President Musharraf so valiantly claimed he would eliminate. It seems clear that President Musharraf has paid no regard whatsoever to preventing infiltration of Islamic militants into Kashmir.

As a result of the October 1 attack on the Jammu and Kashmir State Assembly and the December 13 attack on the Indian parliament last year, Musharraf stated that action would be taken against Islamic militants. He proceeded to outlaw two organizations responsible for terrorism in Kashmir, Jaish e-Muhammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba. He also arrested nearly 2,000 men supposedly linked to terrorists and ordered madrassahs to be closed. This supposed crack down on terrorists and closing of extremist religious schools was a sham. Most of the militants that were arrested are now free and madrassahs continue to recruit and train young boys in Islamic fundamentalism and terrorist activities.

Although Musharraf made claims that he is cracking down on terrorists throughout Pakistan, he has always referred to the Pakistani-based militants in Kashmir as freedom fighters. At the times he has referred to these terrorists, with deep, close connections to groups like al Qaeda and the Taliban, I have tried to highlight that Musharraf is operating under a double standard of siding with the U.S. against terrorism, while allowing terrorism to continue in Kashmir.

More and more, the world is able to see that President Musharraf has dedicated himself to continuing military rule in Pakistan and allowing terrorism to occur in Kashmir.

President Bush stressed in his address to Congress after September 11 that there would be no shades of gray. A country either supports us in our war against terrorism, or it does not. The Bush administration praises President Musharraf for joining the U.S. effort against the Taliban, but this support does not extend to countering terrorism in Kashmir.

There are more indications daily that the terrorist elements are regaining ground in Pakistan, and the Musharraf government is doing very little to condition constrain it. I believe the U.S. should rethink its support for Musharraf in light of these events.

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TWO HARMFUL FOOD STAMP PROVISIONS IN HOUSE WELFARE BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SULLIVAN). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I spoke earlier and just want to expound again on the procedure that was engaged in, or the procedure that should have been engaged in, as we brought forth a major piece of legislation that involves several committees. To my surprise, in the welfare reauthorization bill, there were provisions in there that would have given the States, at least five States, the election of having a block grant and also in that bill were provisions that would allow for the super waiver. Giving the super waiver means that you are almost giving States an unlimited amount of flexibility and authority almost that they do not have to follow any rules and regulations. This super waiver really gives sweeping authority to the Governors of the States and the possibility of programs being diverted or the real incentive really as we look at this proposal, in requiring more work, requiring more day care, more transportation.

When you begin to understand that States are in fiscal constraint, you begin to know how that temptation becomes a real possibility if indeed you are giving pots of moneys in the block grant and say, You can do with it as you please, that gives some of us very much concern, particularly when we are concerned about the poor, concerned about those who need food; and it is food stamps which is indeed our Nation's greatest safety net, primarily to families, families who are working.

We have seen in the last 7 months the increase of a large number of people who are unemployed who are now eligible for food stamps and indeed receiving food stamps. More than 1.7 million individuals have now increased the

benefit for food stamps because they need it. If we block-grant food stamps, you do not have the ability to respond to this unanticipated need because you have essentially received a certain amount of money. Therefore, you do not have the ability to fluctuate and respond to uncertain needs.

The reason that, I guess, I am really upset or offended by this is the process. When you consider that the farm bill, which my colleagues have been trying to beat up on me for the farm bill, but the farm bill was a 2-year-and-several-months' process; and not one time did we hear this provision being mentioned. I serve on the Subcommittee on Nutrition of the Committee on Agriculture. We did not have any debate. We did not hear any proposal. We did not hear any public announcement at all about this. We went to the Committee on Rules and asked them that they should have had due process. In fact, because they did not have due process, the Committee on Rules should have made this amendment we offered to strike that provision so that we could go back to the appropriate committees and have a full deliberation which this bill so rightly needs.

Why is this important? Not only the procedure, it is important to understand the implication of this proposal. This proposal would be devastating for unemployment. It would be devastating indeed for its meeting the increased participation that we are trying to have for working families. It would be devastating for meeting our obligations that we have just passed in the farm bill, where we said we are restoring legal immigrants. If you are restoring them and they are not in your base budget and you are block-granting it, you cannot respond to that. You either respond to your legal immigrants or you have to cut funds.

This is really, Mr. Speaker, tantamount to taking food out of our babies' mouths and food out of our elderly. I think our Nation can do better than that. I think we are unworthy of that kind of action where we on Monday morning are signing into law, giving new benefits and new opportunities for people to be fed and responded to as they need. Yet here we are on Wednesday evening and tomorrow, indeed, taking this away.

Mr. Speaker, both of these provisions should be sufficient for us to have great pause and indeed to vote against that when it comes up again tomorrow.

EDUCATION TAX CREDITS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SCHAFFER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, this evening's discussion is on the topic of education. It is a topic which has occupied a lot of time here on the House floor during these Special Orders of the

last few weeks. For those who believe, as I do, that America's children warrant a profound amount of attention and resources from the country, I would invite those colleagues who might be monitoring tonight's proceedings to come join us here on the floor this evening.

I specifically want to discuss school choice, trying to create a market-driven education system in America, one where government-owned institutions, or public schools, have the opportunity to compete on an even playing field with other providers of academic services and America's schoolchildren become the beneficiaries through the market forces that ought to exist where education is concerned. We do not have that to a large degree in America today.

We have what is effectively a government-owned, unionized monopoly when it comes to the most important industry in America, that being education. There are pockets around the country where you have a competitive framework for delivery of education services. Those pockets exist in some States. They exist in some community schools and in some cities. They exist for the wealthy, certainly, because only the wealthy in America on any given day can afford to forgo the taxes they pay to the government schools and then pay tuition on top of that to send their child to a school where services are delivered by private professional institutions.

But what we really need to do today is try to eliminate this discrimination that exists in American education today between the extraordinarily wealthy and the extraordinarily poor. Because speaker after speaker after speaker who comes to these microphones or maybe testifies before any of our education committees, committees that deal with education, seem to have a unanimous agreement that we need to have a concerted effort in America involving the Federal Government and the States to elevate the achievement of underserved children, the poor, minority children, those who happen to live in school districts that are just not achieving that much on behalf of children, and they need our focus.

Too often in Washington, the conclusion from those kinds of concerns results in an agreement that we should just spend more money, that we should just take more cash from the American taxpayers and send it to the Department of Education, maybe wave a little magic wand and hope that the speech about poor children preceding the expenditure of cash will somehow help underserved kids in America. We have been doing that for years. Sometimes we get lucky. Sometimes we just manage to have the right combination of devoted teachers, committed school board members, a community that rallies around the poorest children in their neighborhoods and a Federal program or two that provides some of the resources. We see those examples of