

people to Washington, and particularly outstanding women.

We are here today to listen to her maiden speech. She enters the Senate with an extraordinary record, as the Senator from Nevada has pointed out, that goes far beyond what most of us did when we came here. She has already made an important contribution to this body.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is served.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 10 a.m., with the time under the control of Senator DOLE.

The Chair recognizes the Senator from North Carolina.

NATIONAL HUNGER AWARENESS DAY

Mrs. DOLE. Mr. President, I first thank the majority whip, Senator MCCONNELL, and the Democrat whip, Senator REID, for their very kind comments this morning. Then I thank you, Mr. President, and other members of the leadership, for your unwavering support of this freshman class.

I also recognize Senator FRIST for the traditional courtesies of a maiden speech to be extended to the new Senator and express my appreciation for his commitment to the rich history of this great tradition.

Tradition is held that, by waiting a respectful length of time, senior colleagues would appreciate the humility shown by a new Member of the Senate who would use the occasion to address an issue of concern.

I come in that sense today to share my thoughts on a matter that weighs heavily on my mind. Hunger is the silent enemy lurking within too many American homes. It is a tragedy I have seen firsthand and far too many times throughout my life in public service. This is not a new issue.

In 1969, while I was serving as Deputy Assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs, I was privileged to assist in planning the White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, and Health. In opening the conference, President Nixon said:

Malnutrition is a national concern because we are a nation that cares about its people, how they feel, how they live. We care whether they are well and whether they are happy.

This still rings true today.

On National Hunger Awareness Day, I want to highlight what has become a serious problem for too many families, particularly in North Carolina.

My home State is going through a painful economic transition. Once

thriving textile mills have been shuttered. Family farms are going out of business. Tens of thousands of workers have been laid off from their jobs. Entire areas of textile and furniture manufacturing are slowly phasing out as high-tech manufacturing and service companies become the dominant industry of the State. Many of these traditional manufacturing jobs have been in rural areas where there are fewer jobs and residents who are already struggling to make ends meet.

In 1999, North Carolina had the 12th lowest unemployment rate in the United States. By December 2001, the State had fallen to 46—from 12 to 46. That same year, according to the Rural Center, North Carolina companies announced 63,222 layoffs. Our State lost more manufacturing jobs between 1997 and the year 2000 than any State except New York.

Entire communities have been uprooted by this crisis. In the town of Spruce Pine in Mitchell County, 30 percent—30 percent—of the town's residents lost their jobs in the year 2001. Ninety percent of those layoffs were in textile and furniture manufacturing. These are real numbers and real lives from a State that is hurting.

Our families are struggling to find jobs, to pay their bills, and, as we hear more and more often, to even put food on the table. In fact, the unemployment trend that started in 1999 resulted in 11.1 percent of North Carolina families not always having enough food to meet their basic needs. That is according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. And North Carolina's rate is higher than the national average. This means that among North Carolina's 8.2 million residents, nearly 900,000 are dealing with hunger. Some are hungry, others are on the verge.

My office was blessed recently to meet a young veteran, Michael Williams, and his family. Michael served his country for 8 years in the U.S. Army before leaving to work in private industry and use the computer skills he had gained while serving in the military. He was earning a good living, but after September 11 and the terrorist attacks, he and his wife Gloria felt it was time to move their two children closer to family back home in North Carolina. As he said, "It was time to bring the grandbabies home."

But Michael has found a shortage of jobs since his return. He worked with a temp agency but that job ended. It has been so hard to make ends meet that the family goes to a food bank near their Clayton, NC, home twice a month because with rent, utilities, and other bills, there is little left to buy food.

Their story is not unlike so many others. Hard-working families are worrying each day about how to feed their children. As if this were not enough, our food banks are having a hard time finding food to feed these families. In some instances, financial donations have dropped off or corporations have scaled back on food donations. In other

cases, there are just too many people and not enough food.

At the Food Bank of the Albemarle in northeast North Carolina, executive director Gus Smith says more people are visiting this food bank even as donations are off by 25 percent. Thus Gus says, "We just can't help everybody at this point in time." To try to cope, they recently moved to a 4-day workweek, meaning the entire staff had to take a 20-percent pay cut just to keep the doors open.

America's Second Harvest, a network of 216 food banks across the country, reports it saw the number of people seeking emergency hunger relief rise by 9 percent in the year 2001 to 23.3 million people. In any given week, it is estimated that 7 million people are served at emergency feeding sites around the country.

These numbers are troubling indeed. No family—in North Carolina or anywhere in America—should have to worry about where they will find food to eat. No parent should have to tell their child there is no money left for groceries. This is simply unacceptable.

I spent most of the congressional Easter recess going to different sites in North Carolina: homeless and hunger shelters, food distribution sites, soup kitchens, farms, even an office where I went through the process of applying for Government assistance through the WIC Program, the Women, Infants, and Children Program.

I was also able to meet, on several occasions, with a group known as the Society of Saint Andrew. This organization, like some others across the country, is doing impressive work in the area of gleaning. That is when excess crops, that would otherwise be thrown out, are taken from farms, packing houses, and warehouses, and distributed to the needy.

Gleaning immediately brings to my mind the Book of Ruth in the Old Testament. She gleaned in the fields so that her family could eat. You see, Mr. President, in Biblical times farmers were encouraged to leave crops in their fields for the poor and the travelers. Even as far back as in Leviticus, Chapter 19, in the Old Testament, we read the words:

And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and the stranger.

So gleaning was long a custom in Biblical days, a command by God to help those in need. It is a practice we should utilize much more extensively today. It is astounding that the most recent figures available indicate that approximately 96 billion pounds of good, nutritious food, including that at the farm and retail levels, is left over or thrown away in this country.

It is estimated that only 6 percent of crops are actually gleaned in North Carolina. A tomato farmer in North Carolina sends 20,000 pounds of tomatoes to landfills each day during harvest season.