

DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR,
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,
AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED
AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS
ACT, 1996

SPEECH OF
HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 2, 1995

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2127) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes:

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 2127, making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, as well as several Related Agencies.

Mr. Chairman, traditionally, the Labor-HHS-Education bill has been one of the most important bills before Congress each year. It funds programs that are key to the Nation's well-being: health, education, social and employment services that touch every person in the United States and provide the means for all of us to live healthier and more productive lives.

That is why this bill, this year, is such a tragic mistake. Its initial problem was the misguided priorities the Appropriations Committee used in allocating spending authority among the subcommittees. A grater problem is the equally misguided priorities used in writing the bill.

No amount of tinkering will make H.R. 2127 livable. Mr. Chairman; the Appropriations Committee should simply tear it down and rebuild it from the ground up.

In many ways, H.R. 2127 is a 180-degree turn from the priorities in last year's bill, in which, even within tight budgetary limits, we were able to strengthen the Nation's investment in our youngest children by increasing funding for Head Start and Healthy Start.

We were able to increase funding for title I, our country's primary mechanism for assisting disadvantaged children, and continue to fund Pell grants and Federal students loans, strengthening our commitment to access to higher education regardless of one's ability to pay.

We were able to strengthen our ability to save lives and improve health with increases for critical public health, health research, and health care programs.

We were able to increase funds for key employment and training programs.

H.R. 2127 is in sharp contrast to those priorities.

It cuts Head Start—cuts Head Start, Mr. Chairman—and whacks 50 percent out of Healthy Start.

It guts spending for title I and for bilingual and migrant education, and totally eliminates funding for Safe and Drug-Free Schools, Dropout Prevention, vital literacy programs, and Goals 2000, President Clinton's ambitious plan to prepare our children for the 21st century.

Minor increases in certain health spending come at the expense of an important family

planning program and both the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Health and the Office of the Surgeon General, all of which are eliminated under this bill.

It slashes key employment and training programs and kills the summer youth program.

Just as hundreds of unfortunate people have died in the nationwide heat wave, it kills the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

And so far, Mr. Chairman, I have referred only to the funding priorities in this bill.

The limitations and legislative provisions in H.R. 2127 are far-reaching meddling in issues under the jurisdiction of authorizing committees.

Among other things, they threaten the health and safety of women, the safety and rights of working people, and the ability of Federal grantees to share their expertise with or represent the needs of their members and clients before policymakers.

Mr. Chairman, this cruel bill makes victims of the most vulnerable people in our Nation, our children, our seniors, our minorities, even our increasingly beleaguered working people.

There is just no reason to support such a mean-spirited bill. I urge my colleagues simply to vote it down and let the Appropriations Committee try again to produce a new bill that will deserve the support of the House.

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SPEECH OF

HON. BRUCE F. VENTO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 2, 1995

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2127) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes:

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to H.R. 2127, the Labor-HHS-Education appropriation for fiscal year 1996. More than any other legislation, this bill represents an all-out attack against working families. This bill is, in fact, an assault on American working families. Under the Republican leadership this bill targets the very programs that help working families to get ahead and to make a better life for their families.

This legislation seeks to return to the sad days of the 1930's, yesterdays work environment, when the working man and woman was nothing more than a tool for corporate interests—discarded when broken on the job. This antiworker bill eliminates the concept of a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. This legislation attempts to silence the voice of American workers by undermining their right to seek fair representation in the workplace through law. This legislation attacks the children of working families by putting them at risk in the workplace and by denying them the essential education assistance that they need to get ahead.

Mr. Speaker, denying our children the opportunity to attain requisite skills is perhaps

the most wrongheaded and heartless feature of this measure. The families and working people that I represent work hard to provide for their families. Some are more fortunate and can plan ahead for their children's education. Others have to struggle to meet the day-to-day expenses. To cut vocational education, student loan and grant programs slams the door to opportunity in the face of youth from working families and destroys their dreams of a good life.

Mr. Speaker, I most strenuously object to the treatment of basic worker rights and protections in this spending legislation. Today on the House floor, the term "workers' right to know" has taken on a different meaning. In the past that phrase referred to the right of workers to know when they worked with materials hazardous to their health. Today, workers' right to know, should be a warning that congressional actions are hazardous to workers' health and rights.

As the House considers this Labor-HHS appropriations, C-SPAN should include a workers right to know disclaimer that this bill is hazardous to workers. This workers' hazardous warning should point out the impact of the bill on:

Workers health—a 33-percent cut in OSHA which means that thousands more American workers are going to be injured or die on the job. Workers' lives, health, and safety are at risk on the job. Over 1.7 million workers are seriously injured on the job each year. The cuts in OSHA will only exacerbate the situation.

Workers pay—workers are getting short-changed by this legislation. The 12-percent cut in the employment standards administration means that businesses can ignore minimum wage and overtime requirements with impunity.

Workers' rights to representation—this legislation denies workers a fair chance to unite to fight for themselves and their families. The 30-percent cut in the Labor Relations Board will do more than tilt the management-labor playing field in favor of the companies. This cut will lock out the unions and frustrate workers' ability to be represented and achieve positive results.

This bill will also have a disastrous impact on education in this country. This measure denies opportunity for our youth, cutting programs designed to equip them for the world of work.

And the litany of cuts to education programs goes on with cuts to Head Start, title 1, safe and drug-free schools and summer jobs programs which in essence strike at our most vulnerable children and most apparent needs evident in today's America. Eliminating programs to help communities train teachers and improve student performance are a slap in the face to a nation that places education as a No. 1 priority. Limiting access to higher education and job training programs pulls the ladder to a better future away from the young men and women who will be charged to lead our Nation into the next century.

For my State of Minnesota alone this means that, in 1996, 2,081 children would be denied Head Start, 14,000 students would go without title 1 education benefits, over 5,000 Minnesota youths would miss their first summer job opportunity, 658 young people would be denied the chance to serve in Americorps,

154,000 college students would pay significantly more for college, and job training opportunities for 3,408 dislocated workers would be refused.

Education is a core value shared by all Americans; they realize that an investment in education is an investment in our future. Our Nation benefits greatly from developing the skills and abilities of future generations. Support for education helps citizens build a better future for themselves, their families, and America by contributing to a successful and stronger overall economy.

Indeed, an educated population—along with the roads, airports, computers, and fiber optic cables linking it up—today determines a nation's standard of living and a country's ability to compete. Nothing is more critical to the future economic success of America than making sure that all Americans possess the education and skills they need to compete and succeed in the global economy. Education is the key to a nation's success. When Congress cuts education programs, we all lose. That is why the distorted priorities of this spending measure are so ironic.

Education funding is less than 2 percent of the total Federal budget, yet it plays a critical role in enhancing the self-reliance, economic productivity, and well-being of our Nation's populace. Cutting education is a short-term solution that will cost us dearly in the long run. Some may boast of fiscal discipline and deficit reduction, but if we add so much to the human deficit, the education and job deficit, what have we accomplished?

This legislation also contains provisions that would seriously harm family planning activities in this country, which could have disastrous effects on the health and security of American families. The legislation we are considering today zeros out funding for title X of the Public Health Services Act, a cornerstone of the Federal family planning program since its inception in 1970. Title X provides family planning and health services to low income and uninsured women across the country who would, without title X, have no other means of attaining these or other primary health care services. Along with family planning services, title X provides valuable medical services such as cancer screening and mammograms and prenatal care.

Government expenditures on family planning services such as those funded through title X have been linked to lower rates of abortion, fewer cases of low birthweight babies, increased utilization of prenatal care, and fewer infant deaths. In 1989, Government-funded family planning activities prevented an estimated 1.2 million unintended pregnancies, eliminating the need for 516,000 abortions. Allowing women access to these family planning programs also saves money in the long run in medical expenses, welfare payments, and other services associated with unintended pregnancy and childbirth.

Another provision of this legislation which deeply concerns me is the proposal to zero out the funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, known as LIHEAP. As a member from one of the coldest States in the Nation, I am alarmed by the potential impact of this mean-spirited action. In 1994, approximately 6.1 million households received aid to help cover heating costs. Nearly half of these households contain elderly or handicapped persons, and about 80 percent of

them earned less than \$10,000 a year. Where are these people to turn when they can no longer afford to heat their homes? Where are my constituents in St. Paul to turn when the temperature drops to 30-degrees below zero and they do not have the money to pay for heating fuels.

The majority's answer to us is that the States and the utility companies will pick up the tab—apparently some in WDC believe that the local government and utilities are ready and waiting to excuse utility bills. Well the reality of the situation is that by zeroing out LIHEAP, the Republicans are leaving many poor families out in the cold.

There is a better way; not all of the cuts need to be made from people programs. The Pentagon, space programs, and corporate welfare grants, are just some of the other Federal programs that should also be subject to fiscal discipline. Surely the process of digging the deficit hole deeper with new tax breaks for corporations and investors by hundreds of billions of dollars would not be even considered, not if good policy is the issue. But, of course, the issue isn't fair policy or good policy, the issue is politics. The issue is ideology of dismantling the Federal Government and impairing the ability of the Federal Government to empower people, hence the attack is directly on this legislation involving working men and women programs and their families needs.

Mr. Speaker—the Labor-HHS appropriations is an assault on American working families. I urge my colleagues to stand up for the backbone of our Nation and to vote "No" on this antiworker bill.

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SPEECH OF

HON. GLENN POSHARD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 2, 1995

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2127) making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies, for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes:

Mr. POSHARD. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to this bill. I am vehemently opposed to the wide range of attacks this bill launches on the American people.

This is the 7th year I've been through the appropriations cycle in the House. I regret to say this may be the most disappointing appropriations bill I've ever voted against.

Let me say that I know my good friend and colleague, Chairman JOHN PORTER, has had to make a lot of tough choices. I don't want my criticism of this bill to be construed as any criticism of him.

But I am compelled to say that this bill is not right for the American people.

I represent central and southern Illinois, America's heartland, an area of corn fields, oil wells, coal mines, and some of the world's leading manufacturers. I represent good, hard-working people.

As I travel the district, I hear the growing fears of workers who see their jobs put at risk by unwise trade agreements such as NAFTA. I hear from miners and factory workers who fear the loss of life and limb in their dangerous lines of work if we gut labor protection laws. And I hear from families who are trying to do more with less, who see their productivity on the job remaining high while their wages don't keep up with inflation.

More specifically, in the 19th District of Illinois, we have two tremendously difficult situations which face our communities. On the northern end of the district, Decatur is home to three contentious labor and management disputes which have affected thousands of workers, their families and the entire community. I have encouraged labor and management to meet each other at the bargaining table to resolve their differences. One key element in the collective bargaining process is the existence of the National Labor Relations Board, which this bill will cut by nearly 30 percent.

The bill also eliminates the Presidential order barring permanent replacement of workers who are striking against companies with Federal contracts. Let me again emphasize, I support the collective bargaining process which has served this country well. But part of that process must include the right of men and women to strike without being permanently replaced. This bill takes sides against workers who are exercising their bargaining rights and should be changed.

In the southern part of the 19th District, men and women have for years fueled the economy of this Nation by mining the coal found hundreds of feet into the belly of the earth. Things are much better than they used to be, but those are still dangerous jobs. This bill cuts funding for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's enforcement budget and limits its ability to act in certain instances. Surely this country is rich enough to make sure that people can go to work with out best efforts to make sure they have a safe place in which to work.

We also have men and women who've worked in the coal mines for decades and have lost their jobs because the Clean Air Act has closed down markets for the coal at their mines. These people need new jobs—quite often they need training to help them come back into the work force—but this bill provides \$166 million less than current spending and \$255 million less than the administration request for adult job training. The same is true for the dislocated workers program—\$378.5 million less than current spending and \$546 million less than the administration request.

Those are tough numbers at a time when the American economy is in transition and people are discovering that the jobs they used to have are gone, or the ones they have could be pulled out from under them at a moment's notice. We don't guarantee anyone a job for life, but we ought to recognize that changes in the world economy impact real people, who want to buy a car, send their kids to college, and support their communities. They need help doing that, so that if their job disappears, they don't have to spend months on unemployment and we can help them get back into the work force.

And what investment are we making in our children? We're reducing funding for title I programs which help school districts which have