

CALLING FOR INCLUSION OF NATIONAL CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT IN WELFARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. MARTINEZ] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call for the inclusion of a national child support enforcement program in any welfare reform proposal considered by this body.

Raising a family is no easy task. I don't think anyone here today would say differently. Parenting requires time, patience, sacrifice, love, and of course, money. And according to 1992 statistics, over 8½ million women are raising families alone.

Considering all that being a parent requires, it should come as no surprise that many of these women require assistance—assistance from friends, family, and from the Federal Government. For instance, of those 8½ million women currently raising families alone, over 3 million collect welfare. They collect welfare in order to provide their children with the food, shelter, clothing, and medical care they need to survive.

It's no secret that welfare costs the Federal Government a lot of money. As a matter of fact, it costs nearly \$86 billion every year. It's also no secret that the Federal Government is looking for ways to decrease that amount.

Let's discuss the Personal Responsibility Act, the welfare reform proposal included in the Republican Contract With America. The proposal calls for all Americans to take charge of their lives and assume responsibility for themselves. Specifically, it calls for young mothers to give up their children and go to work. It calls for children to live away from their homes and their families. The bottom line is it calls for both mothers and children to get off welfare.

While this idea seems well and good, a particular and critical segment of the population is consistently absent from the picture and from the Personal Responsibility Act—the fathers. Where is it mentioned in the Personal Responsibility Act that fathers must provide for their children? Where does it say fathers need to go to work and contribute to their children's financial needs? Indeed, I see no reference to fathers in this proposal at all.

Did 8½ million women impregnate themselves? As far as I am aware, the last time a woman found herself with child without any help from the opposite sex was in the year 4 B.C.

So, if we agree that women cannot get pregnant alone, why should we insist that they alone take responsibility for the children that result. Why should the fathers be let off scot-free? The truth of the matter is, they shouldn't. And for several decades the Federal Government has helped ensure that fathers take responsibility for their children.

The child support enforcement program, established in 1975, helps millions of mothers every year identify, and collect child support from the fathers of their children. In 1993, the child support enforcement program collected \$8.9 billion in child support from delinquent fathers through income withholding, income tax refund interception, property liens, and security bonds. That's \$8.9 billion that didn't come from the Federal budget. And that's only the beginning.

Because tracking and collection across State lines is so difficult, \$34 billion in potential child support is not collected each year. If we could establish a national program to work with State and local agencies to track and collect child support from delinquent fathers we could further take the responsibility off the Federal Government and put it where it belongs—on the parents—both parents.

Look, no government or government agency, be it Federal, State, or local can ensure that both parents provide their children with love and emotional support. No government can insist that both parents spend time with their children. However, the government, Federal, State, and local, can, by working together, ensure that both parents at the very least, fulfill their financial obligations to their children.

If we really want all Americans to take responsibility for themselves let's make sure we are talking about all Americans. Make fathers accountable. Make child support enforcement part of welfare reform.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mrs. THURMAN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mrs. THURMAN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

CONCERNS REGARDING THE MEXICAN BAILOUT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. MENENDEZ] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I got elected for the 13th district of New Jersey to voice on behalf of my citizens their concerns, and certainly it is on their behalf that I have taken to the well today to speak on them.

I want to state very clearly and very loudly for the record that I stand staunchly opposed to the unilateral action by the executive, in collaboration with the leadership of the House, to grant the Mexican Government an unprecedented bailout package worth billions of dollars. Not a single congressional voice nor a single American voter will be heard by virtue of the process that has taken place on this banker and speculator bailout bill.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is a travesty for justice. I know that some in the House were involved in negotiations, but overwhelmingly many were not, many who also represent hundreds of thousands of taxpayers in their congressional districts.

For those of us who did not support NAFTA, we spoke up about our concerns at that time, that Mexico was a developing economy, not a developed economy. We spoke up about our concerns about the value of the peso, and that in fact it was way beyond where it should be in terms of its exchange rate.

Sure enough, Mr. Speaker, after NAFTA and after the presidential elections in Mexico, we find that many of these things are coming true. So without creating the appropriate safeguards

during the NAFTA debate and subsequently in its enactment, it is my belief that we created a speculative environment in which middle class investors, the mom-and-pop investors so vital to Wall Street brokers, were led to believe that investing some of their hard-earned life savings in mutual funds, in pension funds, investing in emerging Mexico was a safe bet, but billions of dollars later, we know it is not. In one week alone U.S. investors took over \$12 billion out of the Mexican market.

I question, one of the things I would have liked to have seen is how much money the middle class families across the country lose in the context of the investments in a speculative market that we helped create by virtue of how we portrayed the Mexican market.

Today, Mr. Speaker, in the Committee on International Relations testimony was heard on this issue. I would like to read from one of the witnesses, John Sweeney of the Heritage Foundation, not an institution that I normally quote, but which is of great interest to me, particularly in the context that they were supporters of NAFTA and free market ideas.

He said: "This new plan is an improvised hodgepodge that will not solve the structural causes of the Mexican crisis. This new bailout plan is bad policy, and it is bad politics."

We were told, Mr. Speaker, that in fact the original \$40 billion loan guaranty was meant to overwhelm Mexico's problem.

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Yet we see that this new package has now risen to between \$47 billion and \$50 billion. So I am concerned if \$40 billion was meant to overwhelm Mexico's problem, why did we have to go to \$47 billion or nearly \$50 billion?

This witness went on to say, "The Mexican crisis needs a stronger free market cure than Mexico's ruling political, corporate and labor elites are willing to accept." He went on to criticize this action.

I think his last comment that I would like to make, he said, "Bailing out Mexico will tell governments in emerging markets that bad policies based on short-term political imperatives would be forgiven, and it would send private investors the message that bad investment decisions will be bailed out at U.S. taxpayer expense."

I think that that is the wrong message to send.

It is interesting to see in today's New York Times in the business section how now investors are looking at all emerging markets and their investments in those emerging markets and beginning to question those investments. Maybe they will come back to good old T-bills and blue chip stocks here in the United States.

I think it is important in this debate to continue to raise the questions of what type of speculative environments

are we creating to put middle-class taxpayers at risk, and in doing so I would hope that we would continue to speak about this issue on the House floor.

TIME TO COME CLEAN ON BAILOUT OF MEXICO

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. BARR] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, over the last 24-hour period, we have heard a litany of reasons in support of what the Clinton administration has done in its efforts to prop up the Mexican peso.

We have heard, for example, that the United States economy will suffer irreparable harm if the Mexican economy remains as weak as it is.

We have heard that illegal immigration will explode if the United States does not prop up the Mexican peso.

We have heard intimations that Mexico and other Latin countries will be unable to help continue to control certain undesirable activities such as drug trafficking and money laundering from and through Latin America.

We have heard that delayed action is worse than no action.

We have heard that other Central American countries will soon follow Mexico unless we act in behalf of Mexico.

We have heard that an untold number of jobs here in this country will be lost and money will be lost here in this country, including from perhaps some very important pension funds, if the United States does not act and prop up the Mexican peso.

If in fact, Mr. Speaker, the consequences that would befall the world economy and the United States economy were as dire as the administration is now saying they are, one might very legitimately ask, as I do, where were they when the groundwork was being laid for this crisis through either action or inaction on the part of the Mexican Government?

Where were they when we had before the U.S. Congress Committee on Banking and Financial Services just 1 short week ago asking the 3 top officials from this administration, Secretary Christopher, Secretary Rubin, and Chairman Greenspan to justify to us specifically and explicitly why at that time the administration was telling us that unless congressional action occurred, all of these dire consequences would befall.

We asked, for example, when these gentlemen were before the Banking Committee on which I have the honor of serving, what guarantees do we have? How will we know and how can we assure the American people that Mexico will not default on the loan guarantees that this administration was asking us in Congress to provide to them through legislation?

The only thing that these witnesses could tell us was, and I remember one

witness explicitly stating this, we have a team of the finest lawyers in Government and we are sure that they will draft up a document that provides us those guarantees.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that does not leave me satisfied and that does not leave my constituents satisfied. They continue to ask some very important questions that are deeply troubling to me and to my constituents in the 7th District of Georgia.

What happens with that \$20 billion, and many other billions of dollars that are now going to directly prop up a foreign currency? If and when, as many of us expect, the Mexican Government fails to take the steps, the hard steps that are necessary to ensure its continued viability and to ensure the rebounding of the peso, what will in fact happen to those moneys?

What will in fact happen, Mr. Speaker, for example, if in some other part of the world with regard to some other currency, the U.S. dollar, which is the currency that I care about and that the American people care about, runs into problems and we go to the Stabilization Fund and we find that the cupboard is bare? What then do we tell our constituents?

What do we tell our constituents down the road, Mr. Speaker, when the next country comes to us and says,

Yes, we know you are having to ask your citizens to tighten their belts. We know you in America are having to make tough decisions to cut back governments and cut back guarantees in your own country. But you helped out Mexico. Now you must help us out.

These are things, Mr. Speaker, that I think the American people are legitimately asking of this administration which has yet to deliver to us in the Congress an executive order that sets out in black and white where it thinks it has the legal statutory authority to do what it did.

The questions, Mr. Speaker, far outnumber the answers that have been forthcoming. I think it is past due time for this administration to come forward, to come clean and to provide us the background information to let us know why did we get to this situation, what is truly happening, and why this action is necessary.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time to address this very important problem for the people of this country.

LINE-ITEM VETO AND REMAINING CONTRACT WITH AMERICA ITEMS DESERVE BIPARTISAN SUPPORT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today is a very special day, I believe, in the House of Representatives because here today we passed for the first time H.R. 5, which, in fact, will give us unfunded mandate relief. For

too long our State, local and county governments have been forced to pay for the programs that Congress has foisted upon them without any input from the State, local or county governments. As a result of our actions today, counties and local governments will no longer be obligated to pay for programs we passed here in Congress. From now on, if we in Congress wish to pass a bill, we will have to pay for it at this time.

I was very happy to see, Mr. Speaker, this was a bipartisan effort. I suspect and hope that, along with the American people, that the other items in the Contract With America will have similar bipartisan support.

In reflecting on our recent weeks here in Washington in this 104th Congress, we have already seen a balanced budget amendment adopted, which will help get our fiscal House in order and help us reduce our deficit. We have also seen, as I said, the unfunded mandates bill being passed, and now the third part of the program, the line-item veto, is legislation we are about to embark upon, starting with discussions and debates tomorrow morning.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this important piece of reform legislation. In the past, Mr. Speaker, the President had no authority to remove specific items of pork-barrel legislation and now it will be possible for the President to remove waste without rejecting the entire budget package.

A line-item veto will also restore the proper balance between the President and the Congress. In the mid-1970's the Congress upset the balance when it changed the budget process and consciously undermined any President's ability to constrain the growth of Federal spending. Ever since these changes in the process occurred, Congress has been able to simply ignore the President's rescission requests.

The Republican-proposed line-item veto will force Congress to debate and vote upon the President's proposals. This will give the same kind of line-item veto most of our Nation's Governors have to remove wasteful spending which does appear in budgets.

Clearly a line-item veto alone will not solve the deficit problem overnight, but it will move us toward the fiscal responsibility this 104th Congress deserves and wants on behalf of the American people. It would enable the President to slash the pork that is in the budget, would help us to maintain the ability of Congress to disagree with the President, but the Congress would also restore spending cuts by the President if it thought the package of rescissions were inappropriate.

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I believe that the line-item veto, when combined with the balanced budget amendment and now the unfunded mandates reform will go a long way in making sure that this Congress