

[Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

SCHOOL LUNCH

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

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, the Federal school-based nutrition program is not like welfare, which cries out for fundamental change. On the contrary, the New York Times calls the school lunch program "a rousing success in boosting health and academic achievement." It feeds 25 million American children each day. But the new majority is willing to slash and burn a program serving America's hungriest and most vulnerable population.

They want to use them as guinea pigs for the revolution. But one bad thing about a revolution is that a lot of people starve in them.

Under this proposal, New York State could lose as much as \$373 million in funding. They could cause 60,000 New York City children to be dropped from the school lunch program. The Republicans say they are just handing over the program to the States who are bound to do a better job. But let us take a hard look at their proposal.

They are going to dismantle an entire nutrition infrastructure that successfully feeds 25 million children, hand it over to 50 new State bureaucracies, sharply cut funding for the program from projected levels of need, and eliminate minimum nutrition standards. They say this will provide better lunches to more kids at lower cost.

I cannot speak for other Americans, but I do not have any great confidence that the majority of Republican governors nationwide will make school lunch programs for poor children a high priority.

I do not think our State bureaucracy is any more efficient than the Federal one. And the fact is the school-based nutrition block grant will create more bureaucracy, not less. It is written into the bill. The administrative cost currently in Federal child nutrition programs, excluding WIC, is 1.8 percent.

□ 2300

The school-based block grant proposal increases the administrative cap to 2 percent. It retains most Federal administrative burdens such as meal counting and income verification. It imposes an additional bureaucratic procedure to establish citizenship, and it requires States to create 50 new bureaucracies of their own.

Child nutrition bureaucracies will be a growth industry nationwide. The new majority denies they are cutting school-based nutrition programs. They say they are increasing it by 4.5 percent per year. But that would cause decreases in child and adult care food

programs, the summer food program, and after school programs, as my colleague the gentlewoman from California [Ms. PELOSI] pointed out.

That simply is robbing from Peter to give to Paul.

They also fail to account for the 3.5 percent rise in food inflation, or the 3 percent growth in school enrollment.

And they fail to mention that they will allow States to transfer 20 percent of funds to programs for purposes other than food assistance to school children. They say, "Only in Washington would a 4.5 percent increase be considered a cut."

Well, most American families do not see it that way. Assume an American family is financially breaking even this year. The next year their daughter's school tuition goes up by 9 percent, but their family income only goes up by 4.5 percent. The fact that their income went up is irrelevant to them. Their concern is only that they do not have enough. The alleged 4.5 percent increase is a phony number, and even if it were accurate it would not be enough.

The bill strips school-based nutrition programs of their entitlement status. It makes no allowance for the growing number of children who live in poverty. The new majority knows this full well, but apparently does not care.

In 1987, one in five American children lived in poverty. By 1992, it was one in four. The new majority talks about flexibility, but capped block grants are totally inflexible.

Ultimately school-based nutrition programs will face dramatic shortfalls. Under President Reagan, a smaller cut led to 3 million fewer children being served a school lunch. But these new State bureaucrats will not just reduce the number of children served, they have a cost-saving instrument that today's Washington school lunch bureaucrats do not. They will not have to meet strong Federal nutritional standards that have been refined and developed over 50 years by scientists and nutrition experts.

By abolishing these standards we effectively throw out the window half a century of expertise in feeding our children so they can learn, so they can think, so they can grow, so that they can succeed.

The child nutrition program is a health care program, it is necessary to our children, it is an education program, and it is an important part of our country.

REFORMING WELFARE

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

Mr. WELDON. Mr. Speaker, I was going to do a longer special order this evening on defense, but listening to some of the comments tonight by our colleagues on both sides, I had to come

over here and speak about the current welfare reform debate and to lend some feeling that I have personally.

My background in coming to the floor tonight to speak on welfare reform is not one of being an attorney who has never had to live in an area where people of poverty have to survive on a daily basis. I was born the youngest of nine children in one of the most distressed communities in Pennsylvania. Neither parent was able to complete high school because of their having to quit school when they were in sixth and eighth grades to help raise their families. Even though we were poor and even though we were a blue collar family, my father worked in a factory 38 years, we were proud.

My father was proudest of the fact up until the day he died that during the 38 years he worked for the plant, ending up making about \$6,000 a year when he retired, never once did he accept public assistance. There were many times when he was out of work because of strikes, because of situations involving labor unrest at the factory, but never once did he have to resort to taking money from the taxpayers.

He was proud of that because he felt it was his responsibility to support his children. And all of us are better for that spirit.

I realize all families are not in that situation. My parents were, and I am fortunate to have had parents of that caliber. They taught us that in the end it is our own responsibility for how far we go and what we achieve.

I went on to go to college, working my way through undergraduate school with a student loan, and taught school in one of the second poorest communities in our area, Upper Darby right next to west Philadelphia.

Unlike many of my colleagues in here, out of 435 most of them were lawyers. When we talk about school lunches I ran a lunch hour in our school for 7 years with kids eating lunch, and understand the problems and concerns that that brings. I also ran a chapter I program for 3 of those years aimed at educationally and economically deprived kids.

While working as a teacher during the day, I decided to run for mayor of my hometown because of the distressed nature of the community and the problems we had. All of these experiences were experiences I was involved in before coming here, and what bothers me the most is the level of debate we hear in the House today that somehow because the systems that we are trying to fix have not been addressed in the last 30 years in a constructive way in terms of change, somehow what we are doing is going to harm American young people.

Somehow what we are trying to do in the welfare reform debate is mean-spirited and we really do not care about children. I resent that. I have been a teacher and an educator, my wife is a registered nurse. I live in a poor community. I helped turn that town around

as a mayor, as a community activist. I want to do what is right for America, but let me tell you the system today does not work.

Over the past 30 years we have had two wars in America. We won one, that was the Cold War. We spent \$5 trillion on defense. Today the Berlin Wall is down. We have seen Communism fall and the investment we made worked.

The second war was the war on poverty. We lost that war and we spent about \$6 trillion on poverty programs that in inner city areas and in areas where I taught school and grew up actually created disincentives for people and actually took away self-pride, self-initiative and took away the ability of people who were poor to feel good about who they are.

We are trying to change that. We may not get it right the first time, but for someone to question our motives, like somehow we do not care about kids or somehow we do not care about what people eat is absolutely ridiculous. It is not just ridiculous, it is absolutely offensive.

As a Republican who has crossed the arty line on many times, to support family and medical leave, strike breaker legislation, efforts to deal with programs serving the working people of this country, environmental legislation, I take exception to the kind of characterization that is occurring on this House floor that says that Republicans do not care about people or people problems. That is not what we are about.

We have a series of programs in this country that are not working. Talking about school lunch. The largest school district in my district, Upper Darby Township, population 100,000, has opted out of the Federal school lunch program for almost a decade; even though they border west Philadelphia and even though they have 100,000 people in the school district, they have chosen voluntarily not to be a part of the school lunch program. Now maybe they know something that we do not know, at least our Democrat colleagues do not know down here about the school lunch program. For almost a decade they have opted out; they do not want any of our money; 100,000 people in an urban school district have chosen in my district not to partake of the school lunch program.

Where are the doom and gloom predictions that were supposed to have occurred in Upper Darby Township? How could a school district that serves a population of 100,000 people that chose not to be in this program have their children dying of hunger and starvation? Where are the answers from our liberal friends?

I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that this debate would be on factual information, and cut the rhetoric and the garbage coming out of Members on both sides of the aisle in terms of welfare reform.

CHILD NUTRITION

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

Mr. KLINK. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to rise today to speak on the same topic of child nutrition and really again say that so much of what we are talking about, Mr. Speaker, I can remember sitting on a picket line many years ago when I was a news reporter, and the company that was being picketed had said they were going to open their books to the striking workers, and I asked one of the grizzled old union fellows who was out there, I said, "You know we can go in there and take a look at those figures." This striker looked at me and said, "Well, you know, figures don't lie but liars sure know how to figure."

And let me say a lot of the rhetoric I have heard from the other side of the aisle would remind me you can shuffle figures any way you want to, but the bottom line is when you take a look at the proposal of child nutrition we have given a whole new meaning to the term women and children first. We are whacking women, we are whacking children, and we will see more children going hungry because of this welfare proposal that is being put forward by the majority side.

□ 2310

There is not any doubt about that.

You talk about increases, 4.5-percent increase, yes, there are increases. But they do not account for the fact that food prices are going to go up. They do not account for the fact that in most of our districts we are seeing an increase in the number of children coming into the schools. They do not account for the fact that is spots throughout this country, we currently, because the Federal Government has the ability to adjust when there are recessions in certain areas, when there is a high rate of unemployment in a certain area, to get that additional funding in there.

We are going to see under a block grant program for child nutrition far less money going in to provide the same level of food that we have today. Five million children across this country are going hungry today under the current system. You are right. The current system does not work. It needs to be tweaked, but not giving as much food, not accounting for inflation, not accounting for increased enrollment, not being able to move food where it is needed is certainly not the answer.

I was just at a school in my district on Monday with leader DICK GEPHARDT, who happened to be coming through our area. It happens to be in Aliquippa, PA; now, Beaver County, in which Aliquippa is located, is of those counties in what we commonly refer to now as the Rust Belt of our Nation, that saw a tremendous decrease in the number of jobs in the 1970's and 1980's. In fact, in 13 counties in southwestern Pennsylvania, we have seen a loss of 155,000 man-

ufacturing jobs, and it just so happens that Aliquippa is one of those towns that was hit the hardest. In one day in 1982 they lost 15,000 jobs in one small town when one steel mill went down, a 7½-mile-long steel mill along the Ohio River shut down in 1 day.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you that causes a lot of problems. Those problems persist today. But through hard work we have begun to get some reinvestment back in that county. We are beginning to see some of those steel industries not adding 15,000 jobs at one whack, but adding a few hundred here, a few hundred there, and our industry is coming back.

At a time when there is a ray of hope, we are going to tell these children in Aliquippa, 80 percent of whom qualify for free or reduced meals, that we are going to change the rules on them now. Many of these kids who are eligible for free or reduced-cost breakfasts, and the teachers will tell you they cannot teach children that cannot eat, and they will tell you on Monday morning many of these children come in and they are famished. You can tell that they have not had adequate meals over the weekend, and the parents will tell you that they have children that they have to depend on the free and reduced meals, and that block-granting will not get it, that the ability to take 20 percent out of the block grant to pave roads, to build sewers, to lay water lines is not going to put food in the mouths of these children.

They will tell you that children do not vote, and there is going to be a temptation in 50 States across this Nation for some people to decide to take more of that money out of child nutrition and put it into projects where people do vote.

What are we going to have, Mr. Speaker? Are we going to have 50 different social laboratories across this Nation? Fifty different social laboratories where we attempt to see if we are able to do a better job than the Federal Government?

Surely, Mr. Speaker, there are people in States that are going to do a better job, but there are some that are going to do worse.

This is not something that we want to risk.

TERM LIMITS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MCCOLLUM] is recognized for 23 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

THE WELFARE ISSUE

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I just was going to talk tonight about term limits. I wanted to respond very briefly and share with the gentlewoman who is here from Washington State some views on the welfare issue.

I cannot help but respond on the question of the block grants that have