

the contract's tax cut for the rich, and in complete disregard of the merits of these food assistance programs, the Republicans are risking incurring significant long term Federal, State, and local cost of health care, remedial education, and decreased worker productivity.

Of course, there is room for improvement in the programs—we work on this every year. Congress is constantly working to improve efficiency, decrease paperwork, and end fraud in these programs. Last year the Ed. and Labor Committee reauthorized the School Lunch Act. I worked with Members on both sides of the aisle to add a strict penalty for anticompetitive bid-rigging by food suppliers. Almost every year Mr. DE LA GARZA and the members of the Agriculture Committee have passed legislation to curb fraud in the Food Stamp Program.

These programs are good for the recipients and the taxpayers. The block grant contains no requirement that the food programs States create maintain any uniform nutrition standards. The recommended daily allowances for kids and adults in California is the same as those in New York. Only the ability of the children and their families to pay for that food varies.

The current taxpayer savings the Republicans are putting in jeopardy are:

Every \$1 spent in the WIC program saves between \$2 and \$4 dollars in Federal Medicaid costs.

Every \$1 spent on elderly programs—Meals-on-Wheels and Congregate Meals program—saves \$3 on Federal Medicare, Medicaid, and veteran's health care costs. Malnourished patients stay in the hospital nearly twice as long as those who are well-nourished, costing an additional \$2,000—\$10,000 per stay.

Malnutrition permanently impairs brain development and a child's ability to learn, causing an increase in the number of children failing in school and a significant increase in the local and Federal cost of remedial education.

Nutrition programs significantly decrease anemia in adults as well as children and the elderly. Studies show anemia lowers worker productivity and ability to learn new and emerging fields, hurting our ability to compete in global economy.

In my district, as in all other districts across our country, this block grant means more than a loss in food assistance. In Contra Costa County alone it means almost 400 fewer grocery store jobs, \$6.6 million less in wages, and the closure of over a dozen food stores.

I understand the Republicans want to move quickly in debating their proposed legislation in order to meet their 100 day-deadline. However, if the cost will be measured in taxpayer dollars and human lives, it would be unconscionable of the Republicans not to slow down. Please, talk to your constituents, visit a WIC center, eat a school lunch, and find out why these programs are so popular and successful. You owe at least that to yourself, our children, and our country.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GEKAS). Under a previous order of the

House, the gentlewoman from Arkansas [Mrs. LINCOLN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio [Ms. KAPTUR] is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

#### NUTRITION PROGRAMS

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

Mrs. THURMAN. Mr. Speaker, If you look closely at the fine print of the Republican welfare reform plan, there is a proposal that threatens the lives of almost 5 million older Americans. This proposal threatens to force our seniors to go hungry. But so far, this issue has gone virtually overlooked in the large-scale national debate over welfare reform.

It is buried deep within the legislative language of the Republican's Contract With America. It is contained under the section that consolidates nutrition programs for the poor. It seeks to eliminate the crucial nutrition section of the 30-year-old Older Americans Act and to lump funding for senior citizen nutrition programs in with all other food programs.

Seniors are at particular risk under the proposal. While the welfare plan does spell out some mandatory minimums each State must spend on nutrition programs, it does not specify any minimum for elderly nutrition.

Therefore, this proposal would allow States to completely wipe out Meals-On-wheels and other vital services. No protection is afforded by the Federal Government.

Pulling senior nutrition out of the Older Americans Act and separating it from other services for the elderly will make it much harder for communities to assist older people with complex needs. None of us want to create a situation where competing interests are vying for their fair share. We cannot allow a situation to develop where the needs of seniors are pitted against the needs of hungry children.

There is no question that our current welfare system is in need of reform. The debate over welfare reform taking place across this country needs to focus on connecting recipients to the workplace. It should deal with personal responsibility and work, not just saving money. We should be guided by principles that help us solve problems, not create new ones.

The Elderly Nutrition Program, as part of the Older Americans Act, is a program that works. They have a proven track record of success.

Before we can appreciate the value of these programs, we need to understand the problems they address and the effectiveness of their results.

Today, many seniors do not eat adequately because they cannot afford to do so. Moreover, they lack the skills to prepare nourishing, well-balanced meals. Because many of these elderly people have limited mobility, it can be difficult to shop and cook for themselves. Also, many seniors experience feelings of loneliness which sometimes hinder their incentive to make a meal and eat it alone.

These and other physiological, social, and economic changes that occur with aging, result in a pattern of living that causes malnutrition and further physical and mental deterioration.

Since 1973, the Nutrition Program for the Elderly has provided older Americans, particularly those with low incomes, nutritionally sound meals. The broad objective of the Nutrition Program for the Elderly is to nourish the whole older person, not simply to supply basic nutrients.

About 3.3 million seniors are served hot meals in strategically located centers such as schools, churches, community centers, and senior citizen centers. Seniors in this program depend on the fruit, milk, meat, and potatoes because it is often their only balanced meal of the day.

Public and private facilities are also used where seniors can obtain other social and rehabilitative services. This encourages older persons to maintain independence by encouraging social interaction, while at the same time improving nutrition. This program is the cornerstone of a comprehensive, community based and managed service system aimed at providing opportunities for older people to remain independent and self-sufficient.

For those who are homebound, meals are delivered and other supportive services are provided, where necessary and feasible. Nationally, more than 794,000 seniors, 49,000 now in my home State of Florida, have meals delivered to their homes. Yet, the program today cannot serve all who need it. If the nutrition program is to be continued as part of a block grant, it is estimated that nearly 20 percent of the seniors now served would no longer receive meals and nutrition services due to reductions in funding.

Besides promoting better health among the elderly through improved nutrition, this program is aimed at reducing the isolation of old age and offering Americans the opportunity to maintain self-sufficiency. The nutrition program is a fundamental part of a comprehensive service system aimed at keeping older people at home, supporting family caregivers, and avoiding unnecessary and costly nursing home care.

These programs are supported through a vast network of volunteers and through cash and in-kind support from local private sector

groups. Finally, these programs have traditionally served those older persons with the greatest economic need. A significant portion of the cost of these programs are borne by the participants themselves. Seniors contributed at least \$171 million last year to the programs based on their ability to pay.

Moreover, these programs are some of the most effective in keeping administration costs extremely low. Much of the administrative costs of these programs are provided by volunteers. The reduction of funding will have an adverse effect on the potential of providers to recruit increased numbers of volunteers. Furthermore, the number of volunteers would be decreased as well, since many senior volunteers are participants in the programs.

This proposal from the Contract With America does not make cost effective sense. The logic of this proposal is faulty on its face. The proposed changes will result in more people going to nursing homes since preventive and supportive services, including meals, will be decreased. Every recipient who receives meals at home is considered frail and generally at risk of nursing home placement.

If this block grant was created, 5,040 home delivered meal recipients would be dropped from the program, these frail seniors would most likely be unable to remain in their homes and would be at high risk of entering a nursing home. This would cost the Federal Government \$86 million per year in Medicaid funds. As opposed to the present cost of \$7.5 million under the Older American Act and related state funded programs for home based care.

Remember, this \$86 million is only for Florida. It is more than 10 times less expensive to keep people in their homes, where they want to be in the first place. Obviously, the results of block granting these programs have not been thought through. It is just another one of the shallow plans Republicans are offering without thinking through the personal or financial consequences. This plan would end up costing us billions of dollars and cutting vital services to the elderly.

Mr. Speaker, the average age of the people in my district makes it the second oldest in the state. I have worked closely with a number of programs in my District that provide these nutrition programs to my constituents. I know from first hand experience how important they are to a great deal of the elderly folks in Florida.

Nutrition studies from the University of Florida have shown that 69 percent of the congregate meal participants were at moderate to high risk for malnutrition. Moreover, 89 percent of the home delivered meal participants were at moderate to high risk for malnutrition.

Mr. Speaker, I have talked to many participants of these nutritional programs and I receive letters like these every day.

Like the one from this 83 year old woman. She has been going to the same site in New Port Richey every day since 1983. Her son brings her every morning and picks her up afterwards. She loves to be around people and feel useful instead of just sitting at home.

She is very healthy and goes to the site to enjoy the camaraderie of other seniors her age. She is very active at the site and is a regular volunteer.

She is grateful to this elderly nutrition program and stated that "the program keeps her young." If this program were based on income eligibility she would not qualify for it.

Or this letter, that comes from a retired pharmacist, from New Port Richey, who lives alone since the death of his wife. Each day, instead of sitting home alone, he comes to the Elderly Nutrition dining site. He looks forward to volunteering at the site and delivering meals to the homebound.

He writes to tell me that if the criteria for eligibility in the Nutrition Program is changed and he is found to be unqualified, it will leave a huge void in his life. He feels that he would become depressed if he had to stay at home "staring at four walls."

He has the means to pay for his meals in a restaurant, but would be unable to find the socialization and companionship that he needs from other seniors there. Due to physical disabilities, he is unable to interact in recreational activities. At the lunch site he finds more appropriate activities to fulfill his needs.

Mr. Speaker, the debate on welfare has been focused on moving people off welfare and into work. The American people do not want to continue an endless entitlement program without requiring any responsibility on the part of the recipients.

What we need to understand, is that the Elderly Nutrition Program is not welfare. Unfortunately, the Nutrition Program for the Elderly got swept along in a big net cast out to reform the welfare system. This is a program that serves very vulnerable seniors. This program does not belong in the debate on connecting recipients to the work place.

The welfare debate is about personal responsibility and work. The Elderly Nutrition Program is about keeping seniors alive and independent. Not a single person has alleged that the program is anything less than a successful program that has improved the nutrition and physical and mental health of millions of seniors in our country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my fellow members to examine these elderly nutrition programs and recognize the fact that they do not belong in the welfare debate. Including them in a massive block grant, as offered by the Republicans in the Contract With America, would be a massive mistake. It would in the most cruel way, pit one generation against another in the fight for survival.

Last night, President Clinton said that seniors have made us what we are as a nation. He is right. We shouldn't thank them for their sacrifices to the present generation by kicking them out on the street.

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

[Ms. ESHOO addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

#### THE INDIAN FEDERAL RECOGNITION ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES ACT OF 1995

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

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join with my good friends, Mr. BILL RICHARDSON, Mr. PAT WILLIAMS, Mr. GEORGE MILLER, and Mr.

PETER DEFAZIO, in introducing the Indian Federal Recognition Administrative Procedures Act of 1995 which will create an efficient and fair procedure for extending federal recognition to certain Indian tribes. Similar legislation was passed by the House of Representatives last Congress but, unfortunately, failed to pass in the Senate by the end of the session.

Mr. Speaker. There remains a great need for redesign of the current process for federally recognizing Indian tribes. For instance, it was not until 1979, 157 years after the establishment of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, that a comprehensive list of Indian tribes was published. It fact, the concept of Federal recognition did not even become a significant legal issue until the 1970s, following two federal appellate court decisions and recommendations of the American Indian Policy Commission.

The current recognition process is very cumbersome, lengthy and, in many cases, ill-suited to factual and fair determinations. Unfortunately, federal regulations are by no means clear regarding the criteria that a tribe seeking federal recognition must satisfy, nor what evidence the BIA must verify. In addition, the current process has led to a backlog of petitions. Since 1978, the BIA has received over 116 new petitions. The BIA has resolved only 25 cases since 1978, nine in favor of recognition, and 13 against recognition. While in the past two months, the BIA has acted on two petitions, in both cases announcing proposed findings of denial, the process remains unwieldy.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, the costs to tribal petitioners of participating in the federal recognition process are prohibitively expensive, averaging between \$300,000 and \$500,000. In addition, the BIA's own system appears to suffer internal conflicts because the same agency individuals who conduct the research into a tribe's history also make the final recognition decision.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation responds to these problems by creating an independent Commission on Indian Recognition, comprised of three individuals. The Commission would receive petitions for recognition. The legislation prescribes procedures for considering petitions, and affords petitioners the right to adjudicative hearings and appeals, and access to federal courts. For instance, the bill would allow petitioning groups to conduct discovery and cross-examine witnesses and evidence in a Commission hearing. More importantly, the bill sets forth more objective, consistent, and streamlined standards for acknowledging groups as federally recognized Indian tribes. By so doing, the legislation greatly enhances the ability of the federal government to more accurately, efficiently, and fairly determine whether or not to extend federal recognition to tribal petitioners.

Mr. Speaker, today I attended a White House meeting with a number of