

Well, "floorcentric" means to really do something on the floor. Apparently, all along, reform week was supposed to be about rhetoric, about fast-breeder, press-release reactors cranking out things on how much we care about reform, and everybody is allowed to go up to the third floor in the Committee on Rules where there may be a whole of 10 public seats talking about how much they care about reform.

Mr. Speaker, I think the idea is, if they say the word "reform" long enough, people will forget that this Congress has set the record on being by the special interests, for the special interests and of the special interests. That is very sad. We are in desperate need of a reform week. Roll Call is right. They are spelling week W-E-A-K.

#### WE NEED WELFARE REFORM NOW

(Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, in 1965, our country launched a war on poverty. The intentions were good, but 31 years and \$5.4 trillion later, we have nothing to show but poverty, despair, hopelessness, broken families, and a damaged work ethic.

Mr. Speaker, 18 months ago, this Congress set out to truly reform welfare. Twice our efforts were stopped by two Presidential vetoes. This week we're trying again.

Bill Clinton wants to keep business as usual, with bureaucrats in Washington running welfare by blindly handing out checks. But, in order for us to reform the welfare system and bring it into the 21st century we have no choice but to fix it.

Mr. Speaker, our plan not only changes the "business as usual" attitudes of the White House but will bring sweeping reforms. The Republican plan will keep welfare from becoming a way of life; restore power and flexibility to the States; keep noncitizens and felons from receiving these benefits; and encourage personal responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, we need welfare reform, and we need it now.

#### IT IS TIME TO FREE THE MINIMUM WAGE

(Ms. DELAURO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is day 6, and Republicans in the Senate continue to hold the minimum wage hostage. Their unreasonable ransom demands include adding medical savings accounts to health care reform. While the Republicans in the Senate hold the minimum wage increase hostage, they also hold the wages of 12 million Americans hostage, all for the sake of special interests and big donor insurance companies.

The Consumers Union, the same group that publishes Consumers Report

and tells us what to buy and what is a real lemon, has called MSA's a "time bomb \* \* \* that will make health insurance less accessible and less affordable for many Americans."

Over 80 percent of the American people support a minimum wage increase. It is time to free the minimum wage.

Let us give the 12 million hard-working Americans who depend on the minimum wage what they deserve; that is a raise. Stop holding them and their hard-earned paychecks hostage.

#### WELFARE SHOULD NOT BE A WAY OF LIFE

(Mr. HEFLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, one of the most troubling legacies of the decades of liberal control of Congress is a failed welfare system that encourages complacency and punishes those who attempt to work.

Welfare was originally proposed as a temporary safety net for those who fell victim to unfortunate circumstances. It has evolved into a system that 5 million families depend upon for an average length of 13 years.

The Republican plan to reform welfare believes that this system has failed not just economically, but philosophically. A well-intentioned plan to help people get back onto their feet has turned into a system that penalizes people who try to work and traps them in a cycle of welfare dependency.

The Republican bill will restore welfare to a system that reflects the original intentions of its authors and reflects the philosophies that an overwhelming majority of Americans support: that welfare should not be a way of life and that the system should encourage work and personal responsibility.

#### KIRBY PUCKETT: AN AMERICAN ROLE MODEL

(Mr. RAMSTAD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to praise a very special person from the Third District of Minnesota, who exemplifies the unconquerable spirit of America, a man who overcame tremendous obstacles to become one of the greatest baseball players in major league history.

All Minnesotans and baseball fans across the Nation were stunned last Friday when Kirby Puckett announced his retirement from baseball because of irreversible damage to his right eye. But Kirby Puckett's place in the hearts of Minnesotans and baseball fans everywhere will live everywhere.

What a remarkable career: 2,304 hits. In 1989, he became the first right-handed hitter to win a batting title in two decades, played in 10 consecutive All-Star games and won the Most Valuable Player Award in 1993.

Kirby collected more hits in his first 10 seasons than any other major league player in this century.

Kirby Puckett's hall of fame career closely parallels his hall of fame performance as a role model for young people, his hall of fame work ethic, and his hall of fame public service in our community. From visiting kids in the hospital to raising badly needed funds for Children's Heartlink and inner city youth programs, Kirby Puckett has done so much for our community and State.

On behalf of all of the people of Minnesota, I want to thank Kirby Puckett for the joy he has brought to our lives. Kirby Puckett's greatness and impact on the lives of people, Mr. Speaker, cannot be measured by mere statistics. His power will forever be felt in one place, where numbers do not matter, in the heart.

Good luck, Kirby; we will be cheering for you for the rest of our lives. And we wish Kirby and Tonya and their two beautiful children the very best that life has to offer.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. YATES. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 316 on H.R. 3396, the Defense of Marriage Act, which the House passed on July 12, 1996, I had intended to vote "no" and thought that I had voted "no." I found out later that I am recorded as having voted "aye."

Mr. Speaker, I would like the RECORD to show that I had intended to vote "no" on the bill.

#### WE NEED COMMONSENSE REFORM OF THE FAILED WELFARE SYSTEM

(Mr. HOKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, according to the Department of Commerce, about 50 percent of all unwed teenage mothers go on welfare within 1 year after giving birth to their first child. More than 75 percent go on welfare within 5 years.

Mr. Speaker, it is almost impossible to disentangle illegitimacy from welfare. They are interrelated to a degree that is undeniable. Welfare, instead of helping people, encourages a value system that distorts the work ethic, destroys family, enables and encourages illegitimacy, and entraps people in a cycle of dependency. In fact, the qualifications for welfare in many instances are just that: One, do not get a job; and two, do not get married.

Since liberals started the war on poverty in the 1960's, the number and the percentage of out-of-wedlock births has skyrocketed. The rise of the welfare state has coincided with widespread family breakdown. Is it really just a coincidence?

Mr. Speaker, we need to restore the work ethic. We need to strengthen families and we need to instill the positive values of personal responsibility and

work. simply put, we need serious commonsense reform of the failed welfare system.

#### THE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY, WORKING TO PROHIBIT AMERICANS FROM VOTING

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

##### WHAT WELFARE REFORM MEANS

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I could not help but take issue with my colleague who has just spoken about what welfare means. I hope the Republicans understand that welfare reform means giving people an opportunity to bridge out of dependence with child care, with health care, with job training.

There is not one of any of the individuals who are Americans who have said that welfare is the claim of their life. They want to be independent. It is a shame, however, that the welfare reform that our Republicans have tried to put forward simply says that we will abandon those, the least of our brothers and sisters.

Mr. Speaker, let me offer, first of all, the tragedy of what is going on in the Committee on the Judiciary this morning. We in the Committee on the Judiciary, of high ideals and standards holding up the Constitution, are there now trying to deny those citizens who have come to this country and are citizens the lack of ability, if you will, to be able to express themselves by voting on the ballot.

We want now to eliminate bilingual ballots for the U.S. Government for those senior citizens who have lived and worked here, those Asians, Hispanics, and others who have come, who have given of themselves, can speak the language, but may not be able to read as well so they can vote in the U.S. election.

How tragic it is that we are turning the clock back, as well as denying minorities the opportunity to do business with the American Government. What a shame. What a tragedy.

#### HEROIN USE HAS BECOME EVEN MORE DEADLY

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, in recent years, while cocaine abuse has leveled off, heroin use once again is rapidly on the rise.

Today's heroin from abroad is cheaper, purer, and much more deadly than ever before. In fact, estimates of heroin's street-level purity indicate it has gone from an average of 4 percent up to a staggering 70 percent or more on purity level.

A recent GAO study indicated that worldwide opium production has nearly

doubled since the late 1980's, while U.S. emergency room episodes from heroin overdoses increased by some 50 percent.

Just recently, in New York City, we had the much-publicized Red Rum heroin overdose death of a member of the Smashing Pumpkins Band, along with the arrest of that band's drummer for possession of heroin, and cancellation of the band's sold-out performances.

Spelled backward, Red Rum is murder, and in the case of the Smashing Pumpkins member's overdose, it was indeed lethal, taking his life. It surely is murder. Let us hope that the Red Rum message is not one that Red Rum and other forms of heroin are trendy; rather than heroin use is serious and in this case can be deadly.

#### LINK BETWEEN ILLEGITIMACY AND WELFARE?

(Mr. CONYERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, to my astonishment, I just heard my good friend, the gentleman from Ohio, MARTIN HOKE, the distinguished member of the Committee on the Judiciary from Cleveland, OH, make an incredible link between illegitimacy and welfare. I think he knows what he is talking about, because he is a very brilliant Member of this body. Perhaps his 1-minute was so truncated that we were not able to get to the bottom of what it was that was bothering him.

But I would like to invite him privately to join with me to discuss this serious matter of welfare, because I do not want the kind of assumptions that were linked together in a 1-minute presentation to be taken as a serious point of view by my good friend, the gentleman from Cleveland, OH.

#### THE PRESIDENT'S LATEST FLIP-FLOP, APPEASING FIDEL CASTRO ON SANCTIONS

(Mr. COX of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COX of California. Mr. Speaker, within the hour the President of the United States has waived sanctions on Fidel Castro that he himself, Bill Clinton, signed into law just 5 months ago. This latest flip-flop is an extraordinary appeasement of the Communist dictator that will not work.

Since Castro began his sadistic and pathologically anti-American rule in 1959, he has denied civil rights and political liberties at home and exported revolution throughout the hemisphere.

Indeed, beyond assisting dictators and dictatorships, in our own hemisphere he has fielded soldiers and troops in no less than 14 African countries in 1 moment. Cuba has not one independent newspaper, not one independent school, not one independent labor union. Castro continues to exe-

cute and imprison political prisoners, and has driven 1.3 million Cubans into exile in this country.

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union should have choked off Castro's rule, but he still is alive, in large part because of sustenance from the Clinton administration. Having signed the Libertad Act 5 months ago and said that he was for sanctions on Castro, Bill Clinton is now using his Presidential authority to waive those very sanctions.

Appeasing Castro is the wrong way for America to proceed. This latest flipflop of Bill Clinton's is more than a broken promise to the American people and the world. It is, in fact, capitulation that will endanger the world's security. Bill Clinton should be ashamed of himself.

#### THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS GOING THE WRONG WAY ON BILINGUAL BALLOTING, AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, AND THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS

(Mr. EVANS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. EVANS. I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Illinois for his kindness in yielding to me. It was difficult for me to be able to complete a statement that I wanted to make regarding the Committee on the Judiciary on this very historic day of July 16.

I mentioned bilingual balloting, which just simply allows those adults who may speak English, but may not read it very clearly, to cast their vote as American citizens. But likewise, we are reviewing this whole issue of affirmative action, and clearly, it has taken the wrong direction.

I rise for the purpose of citing the Wall Street Journal, where there is an article on an angry CEO from California who happens to be blasting a Catholic nun. The Catholic nun simply wrote to say "As a stockholder, I would encourage you to have minorities and women on your board." This CEO took it upon himself to write an ugly spirited letter, castigating the nun, suggesting she should mind her own business.

That is what happens when the Federal Government begins to take away rights. The private sector then thinks it must rally around ugliness and divisiveness.

I would commend to this CEO to think that this country is full of talented, diverse individuals who understand cyberspace, understand the superhighway, and I commend to him that it is reasonable that he could find minorities and women to serve on his board. What a tragedy. The reason we have that is because the Federal Government is going the wrong way.