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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. NETHERCUTT].

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 3, 1997.

I hereby designate the Honorable GEORGE R. NETHERCUTT, Jr., to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 21, 1997, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority and minority leaders limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] for 5 minutes.

DEMOCRATS HAVE TAKEN LEAD ON CHILDREN'S HEALTH CARE

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, in the coming days, I am hopeful that a children's health care initiative will emerge as a result of the budget reconciliation process. It is my understanding that approximately \$16 billion over 5 years has been set aside in the budget to provide money to help families obtain health coverage for their children.

Since last year, Mr. Speaker, when the Democrats developed the Families First agenda, children's health care has

been a high priority. Although Republicans have failed to realize that 10 million uninsured children in this country is a problem that needs to be addressed, I have to assure my colleagues that Democrats have not let the needs of these children fall on deaf ears. As one of the three cochairs of the Democratic Health Care Task Force, we have held hearings and meetings with child advocacy groups and various health care providers who have all been very clear in expressing the need for Federal involvement in this issue.

Two months ago, I and a number of my colleagues on the Democratic side sent a letter urging that the Republican leaders move legislation forward by Mother's Day that would benefit the uninsured children. Since then, the GOP has really done nothing about the issue while each day more children enter the ranks of the uninsured.

Just as an example, Mr. Speaker, in my home State of New Jersey, over 200,000 children are currently without health insurance, according to a very good estimate. That many children should not be without health insurance in this Nation if we think about what it means nationwide. Many do not realize that over 90 percent of all uninsured children are in working families whose employer does not offer health insurance or who just cannot because the family or the policy that the employer provides, they just cannot afford to pay the skyrocketing costs.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that Democrats understand these statistics and the Democratic Health Care Task Force has developed a proposal to address the problem of uninsured kids. Our task force plan would strengthen Medicaid, create a new flexible matching grant program for working families and enact important health insurance reforms. And this proposal, the Democratic Health Care Task Force proposal, can be considered now that Re-

publicans are being forced to address this issue as a result of the \$16 billion set aside for children's health care under the balanced budget resolution.

Of the 10 million uninsured children, approximately 3 million are already eligible for Medicaid. But what we do in our plan is provide grants to States to help local communities in developing outreach programs to take these 3 million children out of the ranks of uninsured, with maximum flexibility to employee communities resources. So first, what we are doing is to try to get to the kids that already are eligible for Medicaid but for whatever reason are not signed up.

In addition, our Democratic plan will enable children to remain eligible for Medicaid for a full year from the time they are determined eligible. At present, the status is evaluated many times in a given year, oftentimes leading to children having health care insurance one month but not another. This change will offer continuity and allow parents to be more at ease with the guarantee that their child will not lose health care coverage from one month to the next.

The Democratic plan creates Medikids, which is a new matching grant program that will provide States with the necessary resources to seek innovative State solutions to meet the needs of uninsured children in working families. States would be eligible for extra money if they expand Medicaid coverage to cover pregnant women up to 185 percent of the poverty level and all children through the age of 18 in families below 100 percent of the poverty level. Just to give an example, Mr. Speaker, my home State of New Jersey already covers pregnant women up to 185 percent of the poverty level, but they only cover children up to the age of 13. So if they expand that to 18, they then will not only have an expanded Medicaid Program, but they would be able to take advantage of the new

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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Medikids matching grant programs to expand health insurance even beyond Medicaid to a lot more working families.

Under this grant program or Medikids Program, States may provide assistance on a sliding scale, and they have flexibility to determine the level of assistance. They could use the money, the additional funds they get, to pay for programs already helping uninsured children in their State, but the benefits package must be comparable to what is offered under Medicaid. What we are trying to do is to basically get at children whose families have an income between 100 and 300 percent of poverty. So we are going beyond Medicaid to working families who still cannot afford health insurance for their kids but are making more than the poverty level.

The last thing I wanted to mention, Mr. Speaker, is that we do have a component in our Democratic proposal for private health insurance reforms. This consists of requiring insurers to offer group-rated children-only policies thereby making—what we are essentially doing, Mr. Speaker, if I could summarize it, is we are trying to say that, if a group policy is offered, they have to offer kids-only insurance so that parents basically can say, maybe we cannot afford to buy insurance for the whole family but we can afford to buy it for kids.

In summary, what we are doing is expanding Medicaid, granting more money to the States to go beyond Medicaid to cover more kids and making it possible for people who have group insurance to buy kids-only policies to cover kids in those categories. I think it will work to cover most if not all the 10 million uninsured children.

POTENTIAL POLLUTION OF POTOMAC

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from West Virginia [Mr. WISE] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, Sunday, residents of this area, the Washington, D.C. area, found a front page Washington Post article dealing with potential pollution problems coming down the Potomac from West Virginia. This followed a report a couple of weeks ago by a group called the American Rivers group. Since most of the Members in this Chamber at some time or another are going to be drinking water generated at the headwaters of the Potomac, namely, West Virginia, I thought we ought to talk about it and talk about what is being done to deal with this concern.

I think that people ought to know that there is a commonsense solution to these problems and, indeed, a number of measures are being undertaken, and that no one is trying to close their eyes to the situation, but at the same time

we also have to appreciate what is being done and that, indeed, a number of steps are already underway to deal with this.

This is not a new issue. In 1994, Federal and State officials were proactive in initiating a project to monitor water quality generated in the Potomac and a number of agencies came together, along with the U.S. Geological Service and the Natural Resource Conservation Service. They performed a long-term study and found that there were high concentrations of fecal coliform and fecal streptococci.

As a result of these findings the following efforts have been initiated, and I think they are significant:

First of all, the Potomac Headwater Land Treatment project. This is a very significant program initiated just a few months ago in which there is a cost share program funded under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's watershed program to assist poultry and livestock producers in developing a nutrient management plan and directing them to build storage facilities.

Poultry litter composting demonstration project, another similar type of effort.

One area that I think has great promise and is already being tested successfully is the power digest project, a project of the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, formerly working with the Olin Co., now with a West Virginia firm, demonstrating ways to reduce the chicken litter to produce methane gas for energy and compost. This is now ready for full-scale application.

We also have the pesticide collection program in which the Eastern Panhandle and Potomac Valley Soil Conservation districts are holding separate pesticide collection days and already more than 30 tons of pesticides have been collected that is not going into the water system.

The Geographic Information System administered by the NRCS and the West Virginia Soil Conservation Agency to record data on the location of poultry houses and feedlots that could be creating problems. The riparian zone development project undertaken in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Partners for Wildlife Program.

The manure testing laboratory, very significant, established in Moorefield through the cooperative efforts of the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, the NRCS, the Soil Conservation Service and the EPA.

The water quality incentive program, which provides incentive payments to farmers to improve land health by changing their management methods.

Also the litter hotline so that farmers and poultry producers can receive assistance in how to deal with this problem. There are a number of other efforts underway as well, including adding additional staff at the new laboratory in Moorefield to work first-hand on these concerns.

I want to reassure people that several things are being done. I have directed my staff to coordinate closely with the West Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture, Gus Douglas, who has already taken the lead on this over the past few years. We are today in the field in Hardy County and other areas talking with many of the parties involved. The first thing is to identify the full extent of the problem and the second is to make sure that we are working in close coordination.

I believe that there is a coordinated effort already underway. If it is not enough, it will be made enough. But I think it is significant, and I wanted people to understand that no one is taking this problem lightly in West Virginia, that indeed working with the poultry industry, working with the poultry producers, those who own the houses, those who are raising the poultry, working with the economic development concerns and working with environmentalists, we are addressing this problem and indeed making every effort to make sure that the Potomac is safe, every part of the Potomac.

So we look forward, Mr. Speaker, to reporting back on progress that is being made. But in light of these reports that have been issued, I think it is important that many people in this area understand that significant efforts are underway to deal in a very meaningful and commonsense way with whatever pollution there may be, because we all benefit, whether at the headwaters of the Potomac or at the receiving end in the Chesapeake Bay, we all benefit from cleaner waters. And we are dedicated to making sure that happens.

JUNE 4—TIANANMEN SQUARE MASSACRE MEMORIAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentlewoman from California [Ms. PELOSI] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, 8 years ago this week, the world was shocked as people witnessed the brutal suppression of individual freedom and liberty in Tiananmen Square, a massacre which is still not acknowledged by the authoritarian leaders in China. The images of that massacre were seared into our consciousness.

We have not forgotten those who lost their lives for the cause of freedom, and we must not forget those still in prison who have lost their liberty in pursuit of this basic right. Indeed, who can forget the image of the lone man before the tank, portrayed here in this photograph of that courageous act.

I am proud to say that signing this particular poster on this particular poster are the signatures of most of the leading dissidents at the time of the democracy movement in China who have since escaped from China.