

good friends in the other body, Chairman HAL ROGERS and Mr. ALAN MOLLOHAN of West Virginia. They are true professionals. They have outstanding staff, first rate professional staff in Jim Kulikowski, Therese McAuliffe, Jennifer Miller, Mike Ringler, Jane Wiseman, Pat Schleuter, Mark Murray, David Reich, Sally Gaines and Liz White.

I encourage my colleagues to support the FY 1998 Commerce, Justice, State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise today to commend the work of Straight and Narrow, a non-profit organization headquartered in Paterson, New Jersey, which has been a pioneer in the field of substance abuse treatment with impressive results.

Straight and Narrow serves more than 750 people a day, almost all of them poor. Its services cover the whole spectrum of the substance abuse field, from effective prevention services for young people to treatment of the chemically dependent. Straight and Narrow's programs have been proven to deliver effective treatment at a significantly lower cost per patient than most treatment programs. National studies of Straight and Narrow's work have concluded that its results have far exceeded those of other approaches to substance abuse treatment.

Straight and Narrow is currently working in conjunction with the New Jersey Department of Corrections and the National Development and Research Institutes [NDRI] on a research and demonstration proposal to develop a national model of Straight and Narrow's approach to substance abuse treatment. This proposal includes clinical trials of the use of patient work combined with psychological counseling, family therapy, education, job training, and after care for treatment of substance abusers from disadvantaged backgrounds, including non violent prisoners.

Mr. President, I am proud of Straight and Narrow's accomplishments in New Jersey, and I believe that it would be most advantageous for the Federal Government to assist in the development of a model for the implementation of Straight and Narrow's programs on the national level. I believe that Straight and Narrow's proposal is one that the Department of Justice should seriously consider supporting, and I hope the Department will give this proposal serious consideration.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, before I proceed to some closing bills and Executive Calendar, I would like to consult with the Democratic leader. So I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEADBEAT PARENTS PUNISHMENT ACT OF 1997

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 271, S. 1371.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1371) to establish felony violations for the failure to pay legal child support obligations, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, let me take a moment to explain the Deadbeat Parents Punishment Act of 1997, which I introduced with Senator DEWINE and which I drafted with the help of the administration. This measure toughens the criminal penalties we created in the Child Support Recovery Act of 1992 and creates new gradations of offenders to target and punish the most egregious child support evaders. It ensures that more serious crimes receive the more serious punishments they clearly deserve. And, Mr. President, this measure sends a clear message to deadbeat dads and moms: ignore the law, ignore your responsibilities, and you will pay a high price. In other words, pay up or go to jail.

When Senator SHELBY and I introduced the original Child Support Recovery Act, we knew that Federal prosecutors had a role to play to keep these parents from shirking their legal, and I would argue moral, responsibilities. It has been estimated that if delinquent parents fully paid up their child support, approximately 800,000 women and children could be taken off the welfare rolls. In fact, Mr. President, since that legislation was signed into law in 1992, over 386 cases have been filed, resulting in at least 165 convictions to date. And not only has that law brought about punishment, but it has also brought about payment. Collections have increased by nearly 50 percent, from \$8 billion to \$11.8 billion, and a new national database has helped identify 60,000 delinquent fathers—over half of whom owed money to women on welfare. Although we should be proud of that increase, we can not merely rest on our laurels. More can be done—and today the Senate's passage of the Deadbeat Parents Punishment Act is a step in the right direction.

Mr. President, as you know, current law already makes it a Federal offense to willfully fail to pay child support obligations to a child in another State if the obligation has remained unpaid for longer than a year or is greater than \$5,000. However, the current law, by providing for a maximum punishment of just 6 months in prison for a first offense, makes violations only a misdemeanor. A first offense—no matter how egregious—is not a felony under current law.

Police officers and prosecutors have used the current law effectively, but

they have found that current misdemeanor penalties do not have the teeth to adequately deal with more serious cases—those cases in which parents move from State to State, or internationally, to intentionally evade child support penalties. Those are serious cases that deserve serious felony punishment and, under this new measure, that serious punishment will be available.

Mr. President, I believe that making the Deadbeat Parents Punishment Act law will make a difference in the lives of families across the country. I thank my friend from Ohio, and this bill's original cosponsor, Senator DEWINE for his efforts on behalf of children and families, and I commend my colleagues in the Senate for passing this important message. I look forward to this measure quickly passing the House and being signed into law by the President.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a section-by-section analysis be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS OF S. 1371, THE DEADBEAT PARENTS PUNISHMENT ACT OF 1997

The "Deadbeat Parents Punishment Act of 1997" amends the current criminal statute regarding the failure to pay legal child support obligations, 18 U.S.C. 228, to create felony violations for aggravated offenses. Current law makes it a federal offense to willfully fail to pay a child support obligation with respect to a child who lives in another state if the obligation has remained unpaid for longer than a year or is greater than \$5,000. A first offense is subject to a maximum of six months of imprisonment, and a second or subsequent offense to a maximum of two years.

The bill addresses the law enforcement and prosecutorial concern that the current statute does not adequately address more serious instances of nonpayment of support obligations. For such offenses a maximum term of imprisonment of just six months does not meet the sentencing goals of punishment and deterrence. Aggravated offenses, such as those involving parents who move from state to state to evade child support payments, require more severe penalties.

Section 2 of the bill creates two new categories of felony offenses, subject to a two-year maximum prison term. These are: (1) traveling in interstate or foreign commerce with the intent to evade a support obligation if the obligation has remained unpaid for a period longer than one year or is greater than \$5,000; and (2) willfully failing to pay a support obligation regarding a child residing in another state if the obligation has remained unpaid for a period longer than two years or is greater than \$10,000. These offenses, proposed 18 U.S.C. 228(a) (2) and (3), indicate a level of culpability greater than that reflected by the current six-month maximum prison term for a first offense. The level of culpability demonstrated by offenders who commit the offenses described in these provisions is akin to that demonstrated by repeat offenders under current law, who are subject to a maximum two-year prison term.

Proposed section 228(b) of title 18, United States Code, states that the existence of a support obligation in effect for the time period charged in the indictment or information creates a rebuttable presumption that the obligor has the ability to pay the support

obligation for that period. Although "ability to pay" is not an element of the offense, a demonstration of the obligor's ability to pay contributes to a showing of willful failure to pay the known obligation. The presumption in favor of ability to pay is needed because proof that the obligor is earning or acquiring income or assets is difficult. Child support offenders are notorious for hiding assets and failing to document earnings. A presumption of ability to pay, based on the existence of a support obligation determined under state law, is useful in the jury's determination of whether the nonpayment was willful. An offender who lacks the ability to pay a support obligation due to legitimate, changed circumstances occurring after the issuance of a support order has state civil means available to reduce the support obligation and thereby avoid violation of the federal criminal statute in the first instance. In addition, the presumption of ability to pay set forth in the bill is rebuttable, a defendant can put forth evidence of his or her inability to pay.

The reference to mandatory restitution in proposed section 228(d) of title 18, United States Code, amends the current restitution requirement in section 228(c). The amendment conforms the restitution citation to the new mandatory restitution provision of federal law, 18 U.S.C. 3663A, enacted as part of the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, P.L. 104-132, section 204. This change simply clarifies the applicability of that statute to the offense of failure to pay legal child support obligations.

Proposed subsection (e) clarifies that prosecutions for violations of this section may be brought either in the district where the child resided or the obligor resided during a period of nonpayment. Inclusion of this language is necessary in light of a recent case, *Murphy v. United States*, 934 F.Supp. 736 (W.D. Va. 1996), which held that a prosecution had been improperly brought in the Western District of Virginia, where the child resided, because the obligor was required, by court order, to send his child support payments to the state of Texas. Proposed subsection (e) is not meant to exclude other venue statutes, such as section 3237 of title 18, United States Code, which applies to offenses begun in one district and completed in another.

For all of the violations set forth in proposed subsection (a) of section 228, the government must show the existence of a determination regarding the support obligation, as under current law. Under proposed subsection (f)(3) the government must show, for example, that the support obligation is an amount determined under a court order or an order of an administrative process pursuant to the law of a State to be due from a person for the support and maintenance of a child or of a child and the parent with whom the child is living. Proposed subsection (f)(3), however, expands the scope of covered support obligations to include amounts determined under a court order or an order of an administrative process pursuant to the law of an Indian tribe. Subsection (f)(1) defines the term "Indian tribe" to mean an Indian or Alaska Native tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village, or community that the Secretary of Interior acknowledges to exist as an Indian tribe pursuant to section 102 of the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994, 25 U.S.C. 479a. The expanded definition permits enforcement of the statute for all children for whom child support was ordered by either a state or tribal court or through a state or tribal administrative process.

Proposed subsection (f)(2) of section 228 amends the definition of "state," currently in subsection (d)(2), to clarify that prosecutions may be brought under this statute in a commonwealth, such as Puerto Rico. The current definition of "state" in section 228,

which includes possessions and territories of the United States, does not expressly include commonwealths.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read the third time and passed; that the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; and that any statements relating to the bill appear at the appropriate place in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 1371) was read the third time and passed, as follows:

S. 1371

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Deadbeat Parents Punishment Act of 1997".

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF FELONY VIOLATIONS.

Section 228 of title 18, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"§ 228. Failure to pay legal child support obligations

"(a) OFFENSE.—Any person who—

"(1) willfully fails to pay a support obligation with respect to a child who resides in another State, if such obligation has remained unpaid for a period longer than 1 year, or is greater than \$5,000;

"(2) travels in interstate or foreign commerce with the intent to evade a support obligation, if such obligation has remained unpaid for a period longer than 1 year, or is greater than \$5,000; or

"(3) willfully fails to pay a support obligation with respect to a child who resides in another State, if such obligation has remained unpaid for a period longer than 2 years, or is greater than \$10,000; shall be punished as provided in subsection (c).

"(b) PRESUMPTION.—The existence of a support obligation that was in effect for the time period charged in the indictment or information creates a rebuttable presumption that the obligor has the ability to pay the support obligation for that time period.

"(c) PUNISHMENT.—The punishment for an offense under this section is—

"(1) in the case of a first offense under subsection (a)(1), a fine under this title, imprisonment for not more than 6 months, or both; and

"(2) in the case of an offense under paragraph (2) or (3) of subsection (a), or a second or subsequent offense under subsection (a)(1), a fine under this title, imprisonment for not more than 2 years, or both.

"(d) MANDATORY RESTITUTION.—Upon a conviction under this section, the court shall order restitution under section 3663A in an amount equal to the total unpaid support obligation as it exists at the time of sentencing.

"(e) VENUE.—With respect to an offense under this section, an action may be inquired of and prosecuted in a district court of the United States for—

"(1) the district in which the child who is the subject of the support obligation involved resided during a period during which a person described in subsection (a) (referred to in this subsection as an 'obligor') failed to meet that support obligation;

"(2) the district in which the obligor resided during a period described in paragraph (1); or

"(3) any other district with jurisdiction otherwise provided for by law.

"(f) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section—

"(1) the term 'Indian tribe' has the meaning given that term in section 102 of the Fed-

erally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994 (25 U.S.C. 479a);

"(2) the term 'State' includes any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, and any commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States; and

"(3) the term 'support obligation' means any amount determined under a court order or an order of an administrative process pursuant to the law of a State or of an Indian tribe to be due from a person for the support and maintenance of a child or of a child and the parent with whom the child is living."

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS TO REMAIN IN STATUS QUO, WITH EXCEPTIONS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent, as in executive session, that all nominations received in the Senate during the 105th Congress, 1st session, remain in status quo, notwithstanding the sine die adjournment of the Senate, with the following exceptions: Bill Lann Lee and Executive Calendar No. 370.

I further ask unanimous consent that all provisions of rule XXXI, paragraph 6, of the Standing Rules of the Senate remain in effect, notwithstanding the previous agreement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.J. RES. 106

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate receives House Joint Resolution 106, the continuing resolution, that it be considered read three times and passed, and that the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADOPTION AND SAFE FAMILIES ACT OF 1997

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask the Chair lay before the Senate a message from the House of Representatives on the bill (H.R. 867) to promote the adoption of children in foster care.

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives.

[The bill was not available for printing. It will appear in a future issue of the RECORD.]

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, H.R. 867, the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, is an extremely important piece of legislation. Let me begin by thanking Senators CRAIG, CHAFEE, ROCKEFELLER, JEFFORDS, COATS, GRASSLEY, MOYNIHAN, LANDRIEU, Chairman ROTH, and Senator LOTT, the majority leader, who has made this bill a priority. I thank all of them and I thank their staffs for all the hard work they have done. I also want to thank our distinguished House colleagues Representatives DAVE CAMP and BARBARA KENNELLY, as well as Chairman SHAW, and their staffs, for their hard work in moving the bill through the House of Representatives.