

My heartfelt condolences go to the Slate family, to Marty's wife, Dr. Caroline Poplin, to his parents, Albert and Selma Slate, to his brother, Dr. Jerome Slate, to his sister, Emily Slate, and to all of Marty's friends and coworkers. He touched all our lives, and we will never forget him.

THE HARSH IMPACT OF THE WELFARE BILL ON IMMIGRANTS.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, last year Congress passed a comprehensive welfare reform bill that drastically restricted the ability of legal immigrants to participate in public assistance programs. It prohibits legal immigrants from receiving food stamps, SSI, and Federal non-emergency Medicaid benefits. The bill also gives States the option to ban legal immigrants from State Medicaid services and temporary assistance to needy families (formerly AFDC).

In the past 2 months, we have begun to see the harsh impact of this bill on legal immigrant families in all parts of the country. Many face being turned out of nursing homes, and cut off from disability payments. These human tragedies will only continue to grow in number and severity without congressional action.

Last month, President Clinton proposed some changes to the law to prevent these harsh effects. I urge Congress to act quickly on these proposals, and I ask unanimous consent that recent news stories on this crisis may be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From Newsday, Feb. 28, 1997]

ON THEIR OWN—ELDERLY, AILING NONCITIZENS FACE LOSS OF FEDERAL BENEFITS (By Geoffrey Mohan)

Gladys Boyack will be 106 by the time tough new federal regulations on welfare go in to effect in August.

She'll also find herself cut from the rolls of a federal program designed to be a safety net for the elderly, disabled and blind.

A British citizen who has lived in the United States for 40 years, working most of those years as a nanny, Boyack never applied for U.S. citizenship. Now, the Islip resident regrets her omission; welfare regulations enacted by Congress are expected to cut nearly 5,000 elderly, blind and disabled immigrants on Long Island from Supplemental Security Income rolls. All of them are legal permanent residents, a status that is a step below citizenship.

Among them is Lucrecia Lopez, 75, of Freeport, a Dominican immigrant who has been in Freeport for 17 years and labored for eight years in a local factory assembling artificial Christmas trees.

Boyack and Lopez received letters this month saying they will lose their monthly payments—\$556 and \$570, respectively—because neither became a citizen during their stay in the United States.

"I couldn't believe it when I got that letter," said Susan Levin, Boyack's granddaughter, who takes care of Boyack in a first-floor apartment at Levin's house. "There's nothing we can do. The last check will come in July."

Boyack and Lopez face a difficult choice at a late juncture in life: struggle through the forms, tests and language requirements of naturalization, or enroll in local aid programs.

Boyack is household and nearly deaf. Lopez, who speaks only Spanish, would have to learn English at 75.

So both will probably apply for less-generous state aid, and depend on their families or charities to make up the difference.

"She's 75 years old," said Lopez' son Jose, an import-export businessman from Miami who supports a wife and two children. "Who's going to take the load? As we say in the Dominican Republic, we have to put more water in the soup."

Boyack and Lopez are just two of 4,929 immigrants on Long Island considered likely to lose their SSI benefits as part of Congress' get-tough welfare policies, adopted in August and scheduled to take effect Aug. 22.

The changes, aimed at saving the federal government \$9 billion over four years, will cut off all but a narrow sector or noncitizen immigrants from SSI.

Similar cuts are looming in the food stamp, Medicaid and Aid to Families With Dependent Children programs.

Congress enacted the cutbacks in an effort to slow so-called chain migration, which occurs when immigrants who obtain citizenship petition to bring elderly family members to America from their home country. The elderly relatives often have a few wage-earning and taxpaying years ahead of them and little means of support from their sponsors.

"We are paying for the sinners who abuse the system," Jose Lopez said.

Congress also made sponsors' pledges of support as legally binding as a contract and increased the period of time in which the sponsors' income can be considered in calculating the new immigrant's need for federal aid.

In part, the moves were inspired by statistics showing that the number of immigrants using welfare programs has greatly increased. For example, the number of immigrants receiving SSI quadrupled in a decade ending in 1993, and immigrants rose from 4 percent of all SSI clients to more than 11 percent over that time period, according to the General Accounting Office, Congress' investigative arm.

"The SSI system is available to people who come to this country and never pay into the system and didn't work," said Dan Stein, executive director of the Federation for American Immigration Reform, which supported the welfare revisions.

But Stein acknowledged that Congress may not have intended to pull the safety net away from unemployable immigrants over age 64 who worked and paid taxes.

"The fact that there are tough cases out there has underscored the need for some grandfathering of hardship cases," Stein said. "But we won't support this if we encourage more chain immigration."

On this point only, Stein agrees with activists like Margie McHugh, executive director of the New York Immigration Coalition. "We still don't believe the American people really intended to throw elderly people out onto the street in the name of welfare reform," she said.

"No one that I know of argues with the idea of people being responsible for the folks they bring into the country, but I think that for immigrants, like everyone else, unforeseen things happen," McHugh added.

Federal officials have since loosened citizenship rules for the disabled, but have not moved to reinstate benefits to unforeseen hardship cases, McHugh said.

Pro-immigration activists like McHugh worry that the philosophical shift from fed-

eral to local responsibility implied in welfare overhauls is not accompanied by a shift of money from federal to local coffers.

Such may be the case for SSI. Current state budget proposals would provide a maximum of \$350 in vouchers to people like Boyack and Lopez, according to Terrance McGarth, spokesman of the State Department of Social Services.

So if both qualify for the maximum, their families or charities would have to bridge the \$200-plus gap between their SSI benefits and the new state benefits.

Not all noncitizens face this peril. Immigrants granted asylum and refugees were excluded, and anyone who can show roughly 10 years of work, even combined with their spouse's work history, can remain on the rolls.

SSI benefits are administered by the Social Security Administration, but they come from general tax revenues, not Social Security taxes.

Boyack, who worked off the books as a nanny, never paid federal income taxes. Lopez did, but not for the required 10 years. Neither woman's husband ever came to the United States, so they cannot be counted in the work experience minimum; both men are deceased.

Activists say women like Lopez and Boyack are victims of flawed reasoning behind welfare cuts for immigrants, a population that frequently works off the books or has not been in the United States long enough to draw meaningful Social Security benefits, SSI becomes their only alternative, by default.

That option is about to disappear.

"I feel very worried and sad," said Lucrecia Lopez. "I asked myself, 'How am I going to support myself?' And so many people are having the same thing happen." SSI and Welfare law.

Supplemental Security Income was established in 1974 to provide monthly payments for the aged, blind and disabled. It is run by the Social Security Administration, but draws its resource from general tax revenues. SSI pays out about \$2.4 billion per month to nearly 6 million beneficiaries.

Nationwide, 12 percent of those recipients are legal immigrants, or were when they applied for SSI benefits. On Long Island, 19.8 percent of recipients are legal immigrants, or were when they applied.

Nationwide, 522,000 immigrant SSI recipients could become ineligible under welfare revisions to take effect in August. On Long Island, 4,929 are likely to lose SSI. An additional 2,552 will be asked to show evidence of eligibility, but are not considered in jeopardy.

According to the Social Security Administration, welfare changes will cut off all non-citizen immigrants from SSI benefits except:

Refugees and immigrants granted asylum, who are eligible only for the first five years after arrival.

Immigrants whose deportation has been suspended; eligibility is limited to the first five years after arrival.

Certain active-duty military personnel, including honorably discharged veterans, their spouses and dependent children.

Permanent residents who can document 10 years of work by themselves or in conjunction with a spouse. * * * Immigrants and SSI Percent of SSI recipients who are classified by the Social Security Administration as legal immigrants:

WELFARE REFORM STARTS HITTING HOME (By Kathy Matheson)

Changes mandated by federal welfare reform are beginning to ripple slowly through Montgomery County, but not slowly enough for Silver Spring resident Marta Medina.

Medina, who came to America in 1987 after fleeing civil war and communism back home in Nicaragua, received notice earlier this month that her Supplemental Security Income benefits will end in August unless she becomes an American citizen or meets one of five other narrow criteria.

Medina has received SSI checks for three years since breaking her arm and injuring her back while working at a hotel in San Antonio. SSI, which is run by the Social Security Administration, is a federal assistance program for elderly and disabled people with low incomes.

Through an interpreter, Medina said she needs the monthly \$484 SSI check she receives from the government to buy medication for lingering physical and emotional problems she suffered as a result of the accident. She is currently unemployed.

To find out how she may still qualify for disability benefits, Medina and her husband, Luis, met with SSI officials last week at a special office in Wheaton Plaza.

"We want to know what we can do," said Luis Medina.

The Medinas are not alone. Under the Welfare Reform Act signed by President Clinton last year, most legal immigrants are no longer eligible for SSI.

Approximately 4,000 Montgomery County immigrant residents receive SSI checks each month, and they, too, will be getting notification letters soon. About 400 letters are going out each week, and recipients have 90 days to respond and have their eligibility reevaluated.

To meet the anticipated response, officials at the Wheaton Social Security office have leased a former Crestar Bank facility at Wheaton Plaza and staffed it with five new workers to evaluate cases like Medina's.

Rich Fenton, manager of the Wheaton office, said the temporary site currently handles about 25 to 30 people per day. But he expects visits from as many as 50 to 60 people each day as more residents are notified.

"I'm expecting that the volume will increase pretty substantially," Fenton said.

SSA spokesman Tom Margenau said out of 6.5 million SSI recipients nationwide, approximately 900,000 are legal immigrants. Benefit checks will stop flowing to an estimated 500,000 of those, according to federal officials, resulting in government savings of \$9.9 billion through 2002.

The government also will save money by cracking down on SSI fraud, officials said. SSA's Office of the Inspector General closed 833 fraud cases in fiscal 1996, spokesman Dan Devlin said.

States also may save money when immigrants lose their SSI benefits. As non-citizen residents are removed from SSI, Margenau said most also will lose Medicaid benefits, which come from a state program administered through the county Department of Health and Human Services.

Local officials are unsure how many people may be dropped.

"We don't have a good sense yet of what the numbers are," said Corinne Stevens, chief of Montgomery County's Crisis, Income and Victim Services. "So many people, if they're able to, are really moving toward citizenship."

Marta Medina said she would like to be a U.S. citizen, especially since Helane DiGravio, an interpreter and manager of the temporary SSI site in Wheaton, said it doesn't look like Medina will qualify for SSI any other way.

"She's going to apply for citizenship, but she knows it'll take a while," DiGravio said.

Medina, who holds a college degree from a university in Guatemala, has lived in the United States for 10 years, twice as long as needed to become a citizen. Her husband,

who is unemployed but does not receive SSI, has been here since 1989.

Marta Medina said she knows education and work are needed to get ahead in America, and she'd like to take training courses for home health care workers offered by the county's Workforce Development Corp., formerly called the Private Industry Council.

But Medina said that as a result of her emotional problems and injuries from her hotel job, she hasn't felt well enough to enroll in job training or English classes, or to study for the citizenship test.

Some experts argue that the test, which requires knowledge of the English language as well as American government, is not difficult to pass—especially for someone who has been here as long as Medina.

"The language exams are extraordinarily easy," said Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank based in Washington. "The language exam does not pose much of a barrier, partly because you can take it over and over and over."

Rector was a major congressional adviser during the welfare reform debate in 1996. When the law was finally signed, Clinton was criticized for excluding legal residents from SSI benefits, since many have worked and paid taxes for years just like U.S. citizens.

Some states, including Maryland, are considering picking up the tab for immigrant residents denied SSI. Margenau said there are 9,645 immigrant SSI recipients in Maryland—about half of whom live in Montgomery County—receiving average monthly benefits of \$345.

Gov. Parris N. Glendening has said he wants to continue food and medical support for children of legal immigrants who would otherwise be cut off, Glendening spokesman Ray Feldmann said.

The governor appointed a Task Force on the Loss of SSI Benefits for Legal Immigrants in Maryland, which issued a draft report Feb. 6. Its findings have not yet been made public.

[From the Nogales International, Feb. 21, 1997]

HUNDREDS OF NON-CITIZENS HERE LEGALLY FACE AID LOSS

(By Kathy Vandervoet)

Hundreds of non-citizens living legally in Nogales or other Santa Cruz County communities will lose their supplemental Social Security income this summer under the new federal welfare reform law.

They will no longer be eligible for food stamps, cash welfare, Medicaid and disability.

Roberto Mendez, manager of the Nogales Social Security Administration office, said there are 1,300 individuals receiving the supplemental payments.

Of those, 475 are legal residents, but not citizens of the United States. All are subject to losing their monthly benefits checks in about four months, he said.

"But there aren't going to be that many. There will be exceptions," Mendez said.

It's up to the men and women to visit the office, located at 441 No. Grand Ave., to determine if they fit under the exceptions clause.

The 475 recipients are being notified by a letter, which are being sent out in weekly batches. Some will receive their letter earlier than others, Mendez said.

They then have 90 days to comply if they want to retain their monthly check.

Those who will qualify for continued aid have worked and earned 40 quarters of coverage, Mendez said.

It can be the individual, a parent, a husband, a wife or the combination of a couple's work to arrive at the 40 quarters total, he said.

Mendez said he is urging concerned recipients, some of whom have lived in the United States for 20 or 30 years, to earn their U.S. citizenship.

"I refer a lot of them to the public library for their citizenship program," Mendez said. He's been told it takes about eight months from the time a person applies until he or she meets the citizenship requirements.

As well, the person must have been a permanent U.S. resident for five years. Those married to a citizen can apply after three years.

Mendez said he's heard from worried residents who say they will have to give up their independence and move in with a family member, while others will be left with no choice but to leave Nogales and move to Mexico.

For additional information, call the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR WENDELL H. FORD OF KENTUCKY

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, with sadness, I rise today to pay tribute to a remarkable Member of this body and a very dear friend, the senior Senator from Kentucky, WENDELL FORD. Senator FORD has announced his retirement after a third of a century in public service, including the last 22 years in the U.S. Senate. When WENDELL FORD leaves the Senate at the end of next year to return to his family and his beloved Kentucky, I will miss his leadership and his friendship tremendously.

For the past 3 years, it has been my pleasure to serve with Senator FORD in the Democratic leadership in my capacity as conference secretary. Since 1990 Senator FORD has served in the leadership as Democratic whip, where he has been an energetic leader and has had a positive impact on the Senate's agenda. During the years I have served with him I have appreciated his good advice and his no-nonsense style. Senator FORD's insights into the issues and problems we address in the Senate, as well as his good word, have made him a valuable and trusted leader. Our leadership, the Senate, and most of all the State of Kentucky have greatly benefited from his service.

Throughout his career in public service, Senator FORD has remained true to his constituents by being a strong advocate for his home State of Kentucky. He knows that a Senator's ultimate responsibility is to the people of his State. As a result of his advocacy and his honesty, Kentucky voters have returned him to Washington three times with landslide election victories.

Senator FORD has also served as an advocate for the Senate. As chairman of the Rules Committee he has helped ensure the smooth operation of the Senate and has been a leader in looking for ways to make the Senate work more efficiently. As a member of the Committees on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, as well as Energy and Natural Resources, Senator FORD has been at the center of many of our most important national debates.

I believe that I speak for all of my colleagues when I say that the departure of Senator FORD will leave a huge