

The hearings will take place on Tuesday, April 20; Tuesday, April 27, and Tuesday, May 4, 1999. Each hearing will commence at 9:30 a.m. in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C.

The purpose of the hearings is to receive testimony on S. 25, the Conservation and Reinvestment Act of 1999; S. 446, the Resources 2000 Act; S. 532, the Public Land and Recreation Investment Act of 1999; and the Administration's Lands Legacy proposal.

Because of the limited time available for each hearing, witnesses may testify by invitation only. However, those wishing to submit written testimony for the hearing record should send two copies of their testimony of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, 364 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510-6150.

For further information, please contact Kelly Johnson at (202) 224-4971.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet on Thursday, March 18, 1999, at 9:30 a.m., in open session, to receive testimony on the Defense authorization request for fiscal year 2000 and the Future Years Defense Program.

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, the Finance Committee requests unanimous consent to conduct a hearing on Thursday, March 18, 1999, beginning at 10:00 a.m., in room 215, Dirksen.

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet during the sessions of the Senate on Thursday, March 18, 1999 and Friday, March 19, 1999. The purpose of these meetings will be to consider S. 326, the Patients' Bill of Rights, and several nominations.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 18, 1999 at 2:30 p.m. to hold a closed hearing on Intelligence Matters.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific

Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, March 18, 1999 at 10:00 p.m. to hold a hearing.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS AND MANAGEMENT

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Readiness and Management support of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet at 2:00 on Thursday, March 18, 1999, in open session, to review the readiness of the United States Air Force and Army Operating Forces.

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

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CROP INSURANCE IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1999

• Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I rise today as one of the proud cosponsors of S. 629, the Crop Insurance Improvement Act of 1999, sponsored by Senator CRAIG. The issue of crop insurance reform is and will continue to be a primary issue for agriculture this session.

The language offered today brings important changes to crop insurance, especially for specialty crops. This bill drastically improves procedures for determining yields and improves the non-insured crop assistance programs. This bill, S. 629, also improves the safety net to producers through cost of production crop insurance coverage.

This is another important tool to reform the current crop insurance program into a risk management program, which will return more of the economic dollar back to the producer. It is vital to find a solution to provide a way for farmers and ranchers to stay in agriculture. They must ultimately regain the responsibility for risk management the Federal Government withdrew.

To help agricultural producers do that, the Federal Government must fix the current crop insurance program and make it one the producer can use as an effective risk management tool. Eventually, I envision a crop insurance program that puts the control in the hands of agricultural producers. It is the Federal Government's role to facilitate a program to unite the producer and the private insurance company.

It is of utmost importance that we get the producers of this country back on track. Crop insurance reform is one sure way to do that. I urge my colleagues here today to consider the positive effect crop insurance will and must have on the farm economy.

Mr. President, I look forward to working with Senator CRAIG on crop insurance reform. I will have some amendments forthcoming, that I believe will make this bill even more effective. I also plan to introduce a bill this session that I believe will make

even larger strides in the area of crop insurance reform. •

DOMESTIC HUNGER

• Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to briefly talk about the problem of hunger in our nation. I would also like to place into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD two recent front-page articles from the New York Times, written by Andrew Revkin. These articles provide valuable insight into the growing demand for emergency food assistance that food banks around the country have been facing over the last couple of years.

Mr. President, as we approach the beginning of the next century, we have much to be proud of as a nation. The stock market has reached an historic 10,000 mark. We are in the midst of one of the greatest economic expansions in our nation's history. More Americans own their own homes than at any time, and we have the lowest unemployment and welfare caseloads in a generation. Not to mention the fact that for the first time in three decades, there is a surplus in the federal budget.

Yet, there are millions of Americans who go hungry every day. This is morally unacceptable. We must resolve to put an end to the pernicious occurrence of hunger in our nation. Hunger is not a Democrat or Republican issue. Hunger is a problem that all Americans should agree must be ended in our nation.

While it is true that food stamp and welfare program caseloads are dropping, hunger is not. As families try to make the transition from welfare to work, too many are falling out and being left behind. And too often, it is our youth who is feeling the brunt of this, as one out of every five people lining up at soup kitchens is a child.

Second Harvest, the nation's largest hunger relief charity, distributed more than one billion pounds of food to an estimated 26 million low-income Americans last year through their network of regional food banks. These food banks provide food and grocery products to nearly fifty thousand local charitable feeding programs—food shelves, pantries, soup kitchens and emergency shelters.

Just as demand is rising at local hunger relief agencies, too many pantries and soup kitchens are being forced to turn needy people away because the request for their services exceeds available food. Today I enter into the record stories detailing some of the problems that these local hunger relief agencies, as chronicled in the New York Times.

Last December, Peter Clavelle, Mayor of Burlington, Vermont, released the U.S. Conference of Mayors Annual Survey of Hunger and Homelessness. The Mayors reported that demand for hunger relief services grew 14 percent last year. Additionally, 21 percent of requests for emergency food are estimated to have gone unmet. This is the highest rate of unmet need by

emergency food providers since the recession of the early 1990s. And this is not just a problem of the inner cities. According to the Census Bureau, hunger and poverty are growing faster in the suburbs than anywhere else in America. In my own state of Vermont, one in ten people is "food insecure," according to government statistics. That is, of course, just a clinical way to say they are hungry or at risk of hunger.

Under the leadership of Deborah Flateman, the Vermont Food Bank in South Barre distributes food to approximately 240 private social service agencies throughout the state to help hungry and needy Vermonters. Just last week, the thousands of Vermonters who receive food from the Food Bank came perilously close to finding out what life would be like without its support, when the roof of the Food Bank's main warehouse collapsed. Though the warehouse was destroyed, the need for food was not, and the Vermont Food Bank is continuing its operation while being temporarily housed in a former nursing home. I applaud the efforts of Deborah and all of the workers and volunteers of the Food Bank who are persevering over this huge obstacle and are keeping food on the table for many hungry Vermonters.

The local food shelves and emergency kitchens which receive food from the Vermont Food Bank clearly are on the front-line against hunger. And what they are seeing is very disturbing—one in four seeking hunger relief is a child under the age of 17. Elderly people make up more than a third of all emergency food recipients. We cannot continue to allow so many of our youngest and oldest citizens face the prospect of hunger on a daily basis.

Perhaps the most troubling statistic about hunger in Vermont is that in 45 percent of the households that receive charitable food assistance, one or more adults are working. Nationwide, working poor households represent more than one-third of all emergency food recipients. These are people in Vermont and across the U.S. who are working, paying taxes and contributing to the economic growth of our nation, but are reaping few of the rewards.

Of the many problems that we face as a nation, hunger is one that is entirely solvable. It is my hope that my colleagues will read these articles, and that this body can then begin to take serious action during the 106th Congress, especially as we embark upon the fiscal year 2000 budget process, to end domestic hunger.

I ask that the two articles from the New York Times, dated February 26, and February 27, 1999 be printed in the RECORD.

The articles follow:

[From the New York Times, Feb. 27, 1999]

AS DEMAND FOR FOOD DONATIONS GROWS,
SUPPLIES STEADILY DWINDLE

(By Andrew C. Revkin)

Ron Taritas was sitting in his office on the lake front in Chicago, phone in hand, dialing

for donations. He was not having a very good day.

As one of four full-time brokers at Second Harvest, the country's largest non-profit clearinghouse for donations to soup kitchens and food pantries, Taritas has the job of reeling in the grocery industry's castoffs—the mislabeled cans, outdated cartons and unpopular brands that will never make it to supermarket shelves.

But eight hours into this day, his best catch was 4,000 cases of Puffed Wheat, Raisin Bran, Honey Smacks and other cereals. Beyond that, all he had to show for his work was 32 cases of chocolate-crunch energy bars from a warehouse in Honolulu, 500 cases of bottled spring water from Tucson, Ariz., and 5,000 cases of Cremora from Columbus, Ohio. "Some days," Taritas said, "it's like catching smoke."

These are anxious times at Second Harvest, the hub of America's sprawling system of church-basement soup kitchens and food pantries.

Over nearly two decades, that network has expanded to serve more than \$1 billion worth of food each year to 20 million Americans. But now, as changes in welfare policy push many people away from the public dole, private charity is lagging even further behind in its efforts to feed the lengthening lines.

Part of the problem, by the charities' account, is rising demand on a system that was never really able to keep up in the first place. Last year, Second Harvest calculated that it would have to double the flow of food to supply everyone seeking help.

But the supply side has begun to hit hard times, too. Most troubling to the charities is the cooling of their traditional symbiotic relationship with America's food-making giants, in which millions of tons of surplus food products has flowed to people in need.

From the first, the key to that relationship was the industry's propensity for waste—and the charities' eagerness to make it go away, gracefully. But in the streamlining spirit of business in the late 1990's, the food makers are simply making fewer errors. And so there is less surplus food to pass along.

These days, a mantra of grocery manufacturers is "zero defects." Chicken not good enough for cutlets is pressed into nuggets; scraps not good enough for nuggets are pulverized into pet food. Sales figures from checkout scanners are fed daily to manufacturers, allowing factories to fine-tune their output to match demand.

And in the last few years, heaps of dented or out-of-date cans and cartons have become the basis for an estimated \$2 billion-a-year market in "unsalable" food. Instead of being donated, damaged goods are exported to developing countries or resold at sharp discounts in suburban flea markets, unlicensed stores in rural areas or warehouse-style outlets.

Certainly, the grocery makers still turn out a lot of surplus food. But over the last three years, after rising steadily for more than 15 years, the donations that are the core of Second Harvest's business have fallen 10 percent. And while a glut of pork and the Asian economic crisis allowed the Federal Government to kick in an unexpected burst of unsold meat and produce last year, demand is increasingly outstripping supply.

Although the drop is not enormous, it has already begun to reverberate across the far-flung charity network. From Second Harvest to the regional food banks and then down to the local outlets, the charities have been forced to devise all manner of new strategies to keep the food coming. They are cutting new deals with the grocery makers. They are reaching out to farmers and fishermen. Mainly, they are spending more of their time

and scant money chasing additional, but smaller, donations from local sources instead of big corporations.

Some food pantries and soup kitchens remain relatively flush. But across the country, thousands of others are cutting hours, limiting the size and frequency of handouts, rationing coveted items like hot dogs and peanut butter and seeking unorthodox supplements like road-killed deer, according to state and local surveys and Second Harvest reports. Some are even having to turn people away.

Last year, half the food charities in New York City cut the size of handouts at least part of the year, according to a survey by the New York City Coalition Against Hunger, a private group. Largely for lack of food, the coalition has begun counseling churches and synagogues against setting up new pantries and soup kitchens.

At the end of the emergency-food chain—the men, women and children standing in line at the church-basement door—that faltering flow of donations is calling into question the notion that private charity should, and can, soften the sting of losing public entitlements. These days, a lot of people in the food-banking business are worrying that a system created as a supplement to public aid is turning out to be an increasingly ineffective substitute for it.

THE CHARITY NETWORK: SOURCE IN A CRISIS IS NOW A MAINSTAY

Twenty-five years ago, the only food bank in New Jersey was Kathleen DiChiara, a homemaker from Summit who carted canned goods in her station wagon from food drives at churches to people in need. Around the country, food pantries and soup kitchens were almost unknown beyond Skid Row.

But as the deep recession of the early 1980's took hold, followed by the budget cuts of the Reagan era, growing numbers of people found themselves without adequate food. Dozens, and then hundreds, of soup kitchens and food pantries sprouted where none had been seen since the Depression.

Even so, Ms. DiChiara recalled, there was always a feeling that the crisis would pass: Congress would restore money for social programs; the economy would revive.

But while the economy rebounded and Congress provided relief for the poor, the demand for food handouts grew, along with the charity network. And by the late 1980's, people in the food-banking business had begun to realize that they were becoming a fixture on the American landscape—more a secondary safety net than an emergency source of food.

Today, Ms. DiChiara runs one of the biggest food-banking operations in the country, the Community Food Bank of New Jersey, with a fleet of trucks that each month distributes a million pounds of food out of a 280,000-square-foot warehouse. New York City, which had only three dozen pantries and soup kitchens in 1980, had 600 in 1992 and now has about 1,100. Across the nation, the food network is more than 40,000 soup kitchens and food pantries strong, with more than 3,000 paid employees and 900,000 volunteers.

Almost from the beginning, the food network formed a tight alliance with grocery manufacturers. The charities offered a perfect outlet, allowing manufacturers and stores to dispose of damaged or unsold goods, cut dumping costs, gain tax breaks and get some good publicity along the way.

Soon, the relationship was institutionalized in formal agreements, and food company executives joined the boards of Second Harvest and its regional food banks.

But all along, there was a queasy feeling that this cozy, co-dependent relationship could not last. Sooner or later, the food

bankers knew, they would begin to pay for their reliance on the industry's prodigal past.

Soon after Thomas Debrowski became head of operations for the Pillsbury Company in 1991, the community relations people walked into his office in Minneapolis and presented him with records of the regular annual donation of several million pounds of flawed or unsold food to Second Harvest.

"They wanted to know if we wanted to increase it," Debrowski recalls. "I said, 'Increase? My objective is to give them nothing next year.'"

To an executive charged with burnishing the bottom line, in a business climate where everyone was on the prowl for greater efficiencies, the idea that millions of pounds of food was either failing inspection or going stale in warehouses was not acceptable. And before long, like most of the big food companies, Pillsbury instituted economies up and down the production line.

On the line for Green Giant Niblets brand corn, where workers once picked out discolored kernels by hand, electronic eyes now detect the rejects, and a puff of air blasts the offending kernel from the conveyor belt.

Shipping containers that tended to be crushed have been redesigned.

At a Minute Maid Hi-C fruit punch plant in Wharton, N.J., the process has been streamlined so that the raw ingredients arrive just 6 to 10 hours before a batch of juice is packaged, maintaining freshness and reducing the chance of a bad run. Where previously juice was not tested for quality until it had been canned, continual checks are now made for factors like sweetness, flavor, color and vitamin content right on the assembly line.

Improvements in marketing have paralleled those in manufacturing.

In the wasteful old days, new products were tested according to the Darwinian laws of the marketplace: A company would blanket the nation with the various new snack foods, for example, knowing that some were sure to fail. Only the fittest survived. The rest ended up in somebody's food bank.

Now, instead of "pushing" products out into the market, as industry argot would have it, the focus is on having them "pulled" into stores.

That means doing research to gauge consumer interests, testing products in carefully dissected markets before distributing them widely and tailoring production to sales. The result is far fewer stacks of failed experiments and formerly fashionable foods, like the oat bran cookies and muffins that became a staple at the nation's food banks after the fad faded in the early 90's.

Over all, what this means is that after rising steadily until 1995, when they reached 285 million pounds, annual donations from the big national food companies dropped to 259 million pounds in 1998.

To a certain extent, the food charities had become their own worst enemy by making waste so identifiable, said Janet E. Poppendeck, a Hunter College sociologist and author of a new book, "Sweet Charity: Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement" (Viking Press, 1998).

"No firm is going to continue to put labels on jars upside down so that there will be peanut butter at the food bank," she said.

'BANANA BOX DEALS': NEW COMPETITION FOR FLAWED GOODS

At the supermarket, the can or carton of soup or cereal that still fails to sell, or is dented after falling off a truck or store shelf, remains the biggest single source of food for the charity pipeline.

Now, in a shift that has the companies and the charities alarmed, more and more of these products are finding their way back out to paying customers.

Over the last decade, a host of "reclamation centers" have evolved as a way for supermarket chains to tally damage and charge manufacturers for losses. At the centers, leaky packages are thrown out, and any usable products are repacked in the rectangular cartons in which bananas are shipped. Some are donated to Second Harvest, particularly if the manufacturer requested that option. But, more and more, the cans and cartons are sold, at pennies on the dollar, to wholesalers who sell them yet again.

One recent posting on a Web site for salvaged goods, by a Massachusetts company called I-ADA Merchandise Marketing, made this offer: "Eight trailer loads of food from one of the leading department store chains in the U.S.A. All food is in date and has been gone through to discard any unmarketable merchandise. This is super clean merchandise. Packed in banana boxes. All boxes are full. You will not find a better banana box deal!!!!!!"

In this trade, Second Harvest sees competition for a scarce resource. Companies like Lipton, Campbell Soup and Quaker Oats find themselves in a tug of war with their retailers over control of this damaged merchandise. With brand names they have nurtured for decades, the manufacturers fear liability and loss of consumer loyalty if a flea market shopper becomes ill after eating one of their products on this largely unregulated market. For their part, the retailers say the goods are their property to dispose of as they wish.

So far, this emerging market has not significantly slowed the flow of donated damaged goods to charities, but staff members at several large food charities project that it will. Indeed, clearly threatened by this booming trade, Second Harvest this year said it would enter the salvage business itself, offering to provide a secure final resting spot of damaged goods, distributing usable items only through its charity network and destroying anything that cannot be used.

REINVENTING THE DEAL: FACTORY RUNS FOR THE HUNGRY

Second Harvest and smaller food charities are trying a host of other strategies as they scurry to keep goods on charity shelves.

"Everyone knew the charities were going to be expected to do more now," Ms. DiChiara said. "What I'm finding is that we're expected to do more with less."

Until two years ago, Golden Grain, a pasta maker, donated thousands of pounds of noodles each month to the Greater Chicago Food Depository, the second largest food bank in the Second Harvest network. But donations fell after the company figured out how to grind up substandard pasta and feed it back through its machines, said the food bank's executive director, Michael P. Mulqueen.

Ultimately, the food bank and the pasta maker came up with a way to compensate for lost donations by running the factory at times of low market demand to create noodles just for the food bank, Mulqueen said. Pillsbury's Thomas Debrowski instituted a similar practice several years ago, and Minute Maid has begun making juice for Second Harvest. Some other companies, like Kraft, have shifted to cash donations.

Charities are also approaching farmers to scavenge leftover crops, conducting the Biblical "second harvest" for which the national group is named. The Clinton Administration last year announced plans for an ambitious campaign to glean some of the mountains of imperfect produce that now go to waste each year.

And last year, Second Harvest began distributing tons of Pacific Northwest fish that is caught in nets but cannot be sold because of Federal regulations controlling some fish

stocks. The program, created with Northwest Food Strategies, a nonprofit group in Seattle, now sends frozen salmon, halibut and other fish around the country.

As always, canned-food drives by scouting groups and religious congregations are being employed, but they provide a fraction of the total flow, and the assortment of goods often does not contain the foods that are most needed—stew or cereal and the like.

At the Neighbor to Neighbor food pantry in Greenwich, Conn., there is a "gourmet section," which recently contained goose liver pate, lemon curd and bamboo shoots.

Over all, experience has produced a discouraging sense at Second Harvest and other food banks that whenever they identify a new source of food, it seems to dry up.

"You peck away," said James Barone, who is in charge of procuring supplies for Food for Survival, the main New York city food bank. "And it's a constant battle."

For several years, trucks and crews from Food for Survival have toured the Hunt's Point produce market in the Bronx each morning after the supermarkets or other retailers have bought their supply for the day, seeking donations of overripe tomatoes or wilted lettuce or whatever else is left.

But the city's greengrocers appear to have noticed, and they often now wait until the end of the morning sales period, then offer cash, at a lower-than-usual price, for goods that might once have found their way into the charity system.

LIMITS ON CHARITY: BARE CUPBOARDS AND SAYING NO

At the food pantry in the basement of St. Raymond's Roman Catholic Church in the Parkchester section of the Bronx, the impact of the irregular flow of goods is apparent as soon as you walk in the door.

There is the large sign on a bulletin board: "Alert. This food pantry is experiencing shortages. We reserve the right to limit quantities, limit the number of visits, extend the time between visits at any time and without prior notice."

And there are the plastic bags of canned goods, rice and cereal handed out to a steady stream of old people, young women and a few young men. These days, the volunteers making up the grocery bags have less to choose from, because of a backlog of orders at Food for Survival.

Even basics like bread and juice are lacking lately, said Priscilla DiNapoli, the program's paid coordinator. When the Kellogg's Corn Flakes run out, as they inevitably do, the workers hand out Department of Agriculture crisp rice cereal printed with a message encouraging users to extend their other meals with cereal.

The flow of food was not coming close to keeping pace with rising demand, as many as 1,500 clients a month, Ms. DiNapoli said. So last spring, instead of letting people return every two weeks, the agency began limiting them to one visit a month, she said. "We just don't have the food."

[From the New York Times, Feb. 25, 1999]

PLUNGE IN USE OF FOOD STAMPS CAUSES CONCERN

(By Andrew C. Revkin)

The nation's food stamp rolls have dropped by one-third in four years, leading to a growing concern that the decline is caused partly by needy people's hesitance to apply for benefits.

A vibrant economy is clearly a major reason that the number of people using food stamps fell to fewer than 19 million last November, from nearly 28 million people four years earlier. But some in Congress, at the Agriculture Department, which administer

the food stamp program, and at private poverty groups say they feel that a significant number of people are not seeking help even though they still lack food and are eligible.

Some officials say they believe that stringent rules intended to put welfare recipients to work and reduce the welfare rolls may have also discouraged people from seeking food stamps.

Some states and cities seeking to cut welfare rolls aggressively, for example, require applicants to search a month or more for a job before they can get benefits of any kind. Often, official say, people in need of emergency food aid simply walk out the door.

"The goal was to get people off welfare programs, but people may have failed to understand that the food stamp program is not a welfare program," said Shirley R. Watkins, the Under Secretary of Agriculture for food, nutrition and consumer service. "It's nutritional assistance."

In other cases, Ms. Watkins and other officials say, it may simply be the rising stigma surrounding public aid of all sorts that is keeping people from applying for food aid, the officials say.

The notion that too many people have abandoned food stamps has caused a flurry of activity at the Agriculture Department.

The department recently commissioned a study to understand a simultaneous rise in the demand on private food charities like church-basement food pantries and soup kitchens. The goal is to determine if some of these charity seekers are asking for handouts at private charities because they have lost access to public food aid, agriculture officials said.

Obtaining food stamps requires a simple showing of financial need, unlike other Federal benefits with more stringent regulations and requirements.

Medicaid has similar broad eligibility, and it too has recorded a similar unexplained drop in its rolls. Some officials have said that while this drop, too, can be attributed partly to the economy, some may also be the result of recipients believing, inaccurately, that once they are removed from welfare rolls, they are also ineligible for Medicaid.

Ms. Watkins said there were indications from states like Wisconsin that some people leaving welfare for low-wage work are not continuing to seek food stamps that could help them make it through the month.

Her misgivings are shared by some members of Congress from both sides of the aisle.

It is becoming apparent that the welfare reforms of 1996 did not anticipate how tightly access to food stamps was linked to access to welfare, said Representative Nancy L. Johnson, Republican of Connecticut and chairwoman of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources.

"We do think there's a problem here," Mrs. Johnson said. "We need to see why state systems don't seem to capture the food-stamp eligible population very well."

"When you make a big change in one system it's going to have ramifications for other systems," Mrs. Johnson said. "Some are positive. If people aren't getting food stamps because they're making more money, that's a good thing."

She said her committee was planning to hold hearings on the matter this year.

So far analysts have been able to gauge only roughly how many eligible people have left the food stamp program even though they need the aid. Last year, for example, the Congressional Budget Office calculated that 2.9 million such people left the food stamp rolls from 1994 to 1997. The budget office report, a projection of economic conditions through 2008, proposed that the rising stigma and barriers surrounding welfare offices could be driving eligible people away.

Whatever the reasons, no one disputes how drastically the program has shrunk, both in the number of people enrolled and in the cost of providing the aid. Since 1994, the cost of the food stamp program has fallen to \$18.9 billion from \$24.5 billion, according to the Agriculture Department.

But some conservative poverty analysts say the drop in food stamp rolls does not indicate a problem. Robert Rector, who studies welfare for the Heritage Foundation, a private group in Washington, said the drop was simply a recovery from a period through the early 1990's when access to food stamps and other assistance became too easy.

"In the late 80's and early 90's you had this notion of one-stop shopping, getting people on as many benefits as you could," Mr. Rector said. "A lot of the decline now is hyped."

He said that Congress would do well to make food stamps less readily available, by instituting work requirements and other rules similar to those already imposed on other forms of assistance.

But Agriculture Department officials are pushing the states to be sure their welfare offices are in line with Federal rules, which require prompt processing of food stamp applications.

On Jan. 29, the administrator of the food stamp program, Samuel Chambers Jr., sent a letter to the commissioners of welfare and food stamp program in every state urging them to review their policies to make sure they do not violate Federal law.

Federal officials had been particularly concerned with the situation in New York City, where newly revamped welfare offices, now called job centers, were delaying food stamp applications and often directing applicants to private food pantries instead.

After a Federal judge last month ruled that the city food stamp process violated Federal law, the city promised to change its practices.

In recent days, the city made another, unrelated policy change that city officials say will trim several thousand people from food stamp rolls. Under the 1996 package of Federal welfare changes, single able-bodied adults can be cut off from food stamps after three months if they do not work at least 20 hours a week or participate in a workfare program.

Counties can seek waivers to the work requirement if they have high unemployment rates, and for two years the counties in New York City had all sought the waivers, preserving the food aid.

This year, though, the city has chosen not to seek the waivers, so that city residents who are single and able to work must find work or lose their food stamps, said Deborah Sproles, a spokeswoman for the city Human Resources Administration.

Yesterday, private groups focused on poverty issues criticized the city's decision, saying it could put as many as 25,000 people at risk of hunger. But, Ms. Sproles said, "this is part of the city's overall effort to start helping people gain self reliance." ■

TRIBUTE TO MRS. SHELBY JEAN ("JEANIE") KIRK

• Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I wish to take this opportunity to recognize and say farewell to an outstanding civil servant, Mrs. Jeanie Kirk, upon her retirement from the Department of the Navy after more than 38 years of dedicated service. Throughout her career, Mrs. Kirk has served with distinction, and it is my privilege to recognize her many accomplishments and to commend her for the superb service she

has provided the United States Navy and our nation.

Mrs. Kirk's retirement on 3 May 1999 will bring to a close almost four decades of dedicated service to the United States Navy. From 1960 to 1966, Mrs. Kirk was assigned to the Navy's Personal Affairs Division. From 1966-1968, she was assigned to the Navy's Casualty Branch. For the next 31 years of her service, Mrs. Kirk was a member of the Navy Awards Branch, starting as the Assistant Branch Head in 1968 and becoming the Branch Head in 1978. Throughout her tenure, she has become a well-known and beloved figure among the fleet, from seamen to admirals, among veteran organizations, such as the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, and individuals, such as survivors of the Pearl Harbor attack. She has assisted countless individuals in tracking, reinstating or garnering appropriate awards and recognition for their service to their country, during wartime and during peace. The letters of gratitude and appreciation she has received over the years for her tireless and dogged research on behalf of thousands of sailors and their families and friends would fill many cabinet drawers. Congressmen and women have benefitted from her briefings on the specific details of awards for their constituents and heeded her advice. Her opinion on Navy awards is honored as golden—decisive and accurate—in the halls of Congress as well as the Pentagon.

She is a recognized authority on the topic of Navy awards from the first Congressional Medal of Honor to the most recent new awards, such as the NATO medal, which honors the service of more than 45,000 personnel as peacekeepers in Bosnia. As the Executive Agent for the Department of Defense, she was responsible for inaugurating the Pearl Harbor Commemorative Medal to recognize the 50th Anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Mrs. Kirk has been awarded the Superior Civilian Service and Distinguished Civilian Service Awards. She is a native of Rectortown, Virginia, and currently resides in Middleburg, Virginia.

Mrs. Kirk will retire from the Department of the Navy on May 3, 1999, after thirty-eight years of dedicated service. On behalf of my colleagues, I wish Mrs. Kirk fair winds and following seas. Congratulations on an outstanding career. ■

NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE

• Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, this bill calls upon the United States to take a momentous step—the deployment of a National Missile Defense system—on the basis of one, and only one criterion: technological feasibility. This bill gives no consideration to the ramifications of deploying such a system on U.S. security, political and diplomatic interests.

It is true that missile technology is proliferating more rapidly than we