

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 discourage 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

could have predicted. And this is of grave concern to us all. Certainly, the proliferation of ballistic missile technology constitutes a serious threat to U.S. national security. The question before us is, Will deciding today to deploy a National Missile Defense system—as yet untested, unproven and un-paid for—advance our national security interests? The answer, in my view, is that it will not.

First, I believe this bill will undermine long-term U.S. national security interests, by placing too much emphasis on just one of the many threats we face today.

While the United States is enjoying a period of relative safety and security in world affairs, we must prepare to face a multitude of diverse challenges in the international security environment in coming years. These include: transnational threats, such as terrorism and drug trafficking; the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; and the chaos of failed states, as we have seen in Somalia and the former Yugoslavia—just to name a few. The threat from ballistic missiles is one of many.

Ballistic missiles are a threat, because they are capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction to American soil. The United States has faced this threat for decades, posed by the nuclear arsenals of the Soviet Union and China. Russia and China maintain their ability to strike American soil. But even though both nations are today struggling through a period of great uncertainty, the threat to the United States of a ballistic missile attack from either nation is low.

The threat of a missile attack from a rogue state, such as North Korea or Iran, is obviously growing. Last fall, North Korea tested its new Taepo-Dong One missile, with a range of up to 3000 km. We also know the North Koreans are developing a Taepo-Dong Two missile, which could have a range two to three times greater. Pakistan has tested a 1500 km range missile. Iran is expected to have one of similar range in the near future.

But ballistic missiles are only one means of delivering weapons of mass destruction. Nuclear weapons can be delivered in trucks, ships, and suitcases; chemical and biological weapons can be delivered through the mail, dispersed in a crowded subway, or inserted into our water supply. These methods of delivery are far simpler, less costly, and far less detectable than ballistic missiles, and they pose a much more immediate threat to U.S. security. A National Missile Defense won't protect us from these threats.

The proposed NMD system would only allow us to defend ourselves against an unsophisticated long-range missile threat with a single warhead. We would not be able to defend against a missile that carried decoys along with the warhead. Multiple objects would readily defeat the proposed system. We would have no defense against

a warhead containing chemical or biological agents divided into many small "bomblets" for better dispersion. This would simply overwhelm the NMD system. The NMD system would be ineffective against cruise missiles or missiles launched from air or sea platforms.

An NMD system also has very limited use as a deterrent to the threats we currently face. In the case of a ballistic missile attack, the perpetrator is readily identified, and U.S. retaliation could be swift and devastating. That alone is a serious deterrent, a much greater deterrent than a deployed NMD system. Deploying an NMD system would simply encourage potential adversaries to develop appropriate countermeasures or to pursue other, more effective means of attack. It is exactly this logic—that an NMD system would be more destabilizing than deterrent—that underpins our commitment to the ABM Treaty.

Which brings me to my second point. I oppose this bill because it will undermine decades of U.S. leadership in international efforts to reduce the nuclear danger.

A unilateral decision by the United States to proceed with a National Missile Defense would sound the death knell for the ABM Treaty, a development that is apparently quite welcome to many of my colleagues across the aisle. This is puzzling to me, because a U.S. signal that we intend to circumvent, violate or withdraw from the ABM Treaty would almost certainly kill prospects for Russian ratification of START II. This would delay any further reductions in the large remaining Russian nuclear force, a goal we have worked for decades to achieve.

I would remind my colleagues that, in 1991, the United States—under the leadership of President George Bush—reached agreement with Russia that it would legally succeed to all international treaties of the former Soviet Union. These include the UN Charter, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, SALT/START, and others, as well as the ABM Treaty. If we refuse to recognize the validity of the ABM Treaty, we not only undermine the credibility of our past commitments to international arms control agreements—such as the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty—we also weaken U.S. leadership in future international efforts to stem the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

If we proceed with this legislation and deal a blow to international arms control efforts, we will have succeeded in fostering precisely the threats we intend to reduce. And furthermore, we can encourage this threat without ever deploying an NMD system, simply by establishing our intention to deploy an NMD system.

Finally, I have deep concerns about the technical feasibility, operational effectiveness and costs of the proposed NMD system.

I have consistently supported development of effective missile defense

technology, and continue to do so. In particular, I have supported the development and deployment of effective theater missile defense systems, to protect our forces and our regional allies. But we have encountered tremendous technological challenges in trying to build defenses against these theater missile systems. We have spent billions of dollars and experienced many failures in our efforts to "hit a bullet with a bullet." The THAAD system has experienced five successive failures. Yet, THAAD is much simpler to develop than NMD.

On cost, the Administration's FY 2000 budget request calls for an additional \$6.6 billion in new funding for National Missile Defense. This would bring total FY 1999 - 2005 funding for NMD to \$10.5 billion. But the Defense Department does not anticipate that we will be able to test key components of the proposed system until 2003. If we encounter problems with this system that are the least bit similar to those we have seen in testing THAAD, we can expect delays well beyond the projected deployment date of 2005—and costs far above the \$10.5 billion we are currently contemplating. And, while I have every confidence that American technological know-how will eventually produce a feasible system, I wonder: At what cost, and with how much real benefit to our national security, will this technological marvel be achieved?

In addition to the financial costs of deploying a feasible NMD system, we must also acknowledge the opportunity costs that pursuing this project will entail. America's leadership in world affairs relies on ready military forces. And the fact is, if we dedicate tens of billions of dollars to developing a National Missile Defense system, we will not be able to devote the resources and energy we should to ensuring the long-term readiness of America's fighting forces. At a time when the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff have publicly and repeatedly expressed their concerns over our ability to attract and keep bright young men and women in the U.S. armed forces, I am not convinced that we should move NMD to the top of our list of defense priorities.

With so much at stake, it would be irresponsible for us today to commit to the deployment of a National Missile Defense system, without further consideration of the implications and potential consequences of that commitment. We must not devote these resources to defending against the wrong threat with the wrong system. We must not create a world where weapons of mass destruction proliferate because arms control agreements are no longer credible. And we must not become so focused on this one defense issue that we leave our nation defenseless against other, more imminent threats.

Mr. President, this legislation poses tremendous risks to our long-term national security interests.●

RECOGNIZING MR. LUTHER'S 3RD GRADE CLASS AT BEACHWOOD ELEMENTARY

• Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I would like to recognize a truly outstanding feat by a 3rd grade class in Fort Lewis, Washington. Mr. Chris Luther's 3rd grade class at Beachwood Elementary School has not missed a spelling word on their weekly spelling tests for 25 weeks. Nearly a month ago, as my colleagues may remember, I announced an "Innovation in Education Award" program to recognize the important role individuals and communities play in the education of America's students. This class and their teacher, Mr. Luther, are perfect examples of this principle in action.

This is a classroom of average kids, all with different backgrounds and abilities. Yet, Mr. Luther has found a way to encourage and tutor these students so they are all accomplishing equally praiseworthy work. The key has not been some magical formula rather, the success of these students comes from a concerted effort by Mr. Luther to boost their self-esteem, to enhance their memory skills, and to impress upon every child in the classroom that learning is important. Those strategies combined with the individual effort of each of his students has clearly paid off.

Mr. Luther's creativity to engage his students in learning extends far beyond spelling. Each year, he produces a "Math Relay" that involves some 2000 students from 88 local schools. This remarkable gathering combines physical activity and competition with math questions and answers. Not only does the size of the event speak highly of its success but, the fact that Mr. Luther handles the mind-boggling logistics of an event this size himself is further cause for recognizing this fine educator.

I applaud Mr. Luther's initiative, creativity and ability to encourage his students to succeed. It is the work of educators like Mr. Luther and the efforts of students like those in Mr. Luther's 3rd grade class who are making education work across America. That is why it is my pleasure to recognize Mr. Luther and his third grade class for their accomplishments and it is why I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting local educators.●

THE TALIBAN'S ABUSE OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN AFGHANISTAN

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, yesterday, Senator BROWNBAC and I introduced a resolution, S. Res. 68, condemning the treatment of Afghan women and girls by the Taliban. I hope my colleagues will join us in condemning the systematic human rights violations that are being committed against women and girls in that war-torn nation.

The Taliban militia seized control of most of Afghanistan in 1996 and now

control about 90 percent of the country, including the capital, Kabul. This group imposes an extreme interpretation of Islam practiced nowhere else in the world on all individuals. It is especially repressive on women.

Before the Taliban assumed control of much of Afghanistan, women were highly involved in public life. They held positions in the government and worked as doctors, lawyers, nurses, and teachers. The picture could not be more different today. Today, under Taliban rule women in Afghanistan are denied even the most basic human rights: they cannot work outside the home, attend school, or even wear shoes that make noise when they walk. They must wear a head-to-toe covering called a burqa, which allows only a tiny opening to see and breathe through. Parents cannot teach their daughters to read, or take their little girls to be treated by male doctors. Mr. President, women have been stoned to death, beaten, and otherwise abused for "breaking" these harsh laws.

The Physicians for Human Rights recently conducted a study of 160 women in Afghanistan and their findings are horrific. One of those women, a 20 year-old woman interviewed in Kabul had the following story:

Eight months ago, my two-and-a-half year old daughter died from diarrhea. She was refused treatment by the first hospital that we took her to. The second hospital mistreated her [they refused to provide intravenous fluids and antibiotics because of their Hazara ethnicity, according to the respondent]. Her body was handed to me and her father in the middle of the night. With her body in my arms, we left the hospital. It was curfew time and we had a long way to get home. We had to spend the night inside a destroyed house among the rubble. In the morning we took my dead baby home but we had no money for her funeral.

The study found that 77 percent of women had poor access to health care in Kabul, while another 20 percent reported no access at all. Of those surveyed, 71 percent reported a decline in their physical condition over the last two years. In addition, there was also a significant decline in the mental health of the women surveyed. Of the participants, 81 percent reported a decline in their mental condition; 97 percent met the diagnostic criteria for depression; 86 percent showed symptoms of anxiety; 42 percent met the diagnostic criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder; and 21 percent reported having suicidal thoughts "extremely often" or "quite often." In addition, 53 percent of women described occasions in which they were seriously ill and unable to seek medical care. 28 percent of the Afghan women reported inadequate control over their own reproduction.

S. Res. 68 calls on the President of the United States to prevent a Taliban-led government of Afghanistan from taking a seat in the United Nations General Assembly, so long as these gross violations of human rights persist.

Our resolution also urges the Administration not to recognize any govern-

ment in Afghanistan which does not take actions to achieve the following goals: effective participation of women in all civil, economic, and social life; the right of women to work; the right of women and girls to an education without discrimination and the reopening of schools to women and girls at all levels of education; the freedom of movement of women and girls; equal access of women and girls to health care; equal access of women and girls to humanitarian aid.

Mr. President, I am shocked that women and girls in Afghanistan are suffering under these conditions as we approach the 21st Century. The United States has an obligation to take the lead in condemning these abuses.

I want to thank Senator BROWNBAC for joining me in introducing this legislation. He has been a strong voice for human rights and I know that he shares my passion for seeing an end to these abuses in Afghanistan.●

RESOLUTION TO COMMEND SENATOR J. ROBERT KERREY

• Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I am pleased to join Senators DASCHLE and EDWARDS and the other cosponsors of this resolution commending our friend and colleague BOB KERREY on the 30th anniversary of the events giving rise to his receiving the Medal of Honor.

During my tenure as Secretary of the Navy, I had the honor and privilege of working with a great many brave men and women—citizens of all stripes who were willing to make the ultimate sacrifice to serve their country. One especially courageous naval officer was Lieutenant (j.g.) JOSEPH ROBERT KERREY.

Thirty years ago last Sunday in Vietnam, BOB KERREY lead a SEAL team mission aimed at capturing certain Viet Cong leaders. While leading this dangerous mission, he was badly wounded as a grenade exploded at his feet. Despite suffering massive injuries from this explosion and being in a state of near-unconsciousness, Lieutenant KERREY did not give up. He continued to lead his men, ordering them to secure and defend an extraction site.

For his heroism in combat, Lieutenant KERREY was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. And just what is this award? It is the highest award for valor in action that can be bestowed upon a member of the armed forces.

The Medal of Honor was created in the days of the Civil War through legislation sponsored by Senator James Grimes, chairman of the Senate Naval Committee, with the support of Navy Secretary Gideon Wells and President Abraham Lincoln. At that time, although serving in the military was required of all men, it had become clear that some servicemen went "above and beyond the call of duty."

So, the first two hundred medals were presented to those who distinguished themselves in the Civil War by their gallantry in action and other