

MEN AND WOMEN IN THE MILITARY ON FOOD STAMPS IS UNACCEPTABLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, again, I am on the floor to talk about our men and women in the military on food stamps. I want to start my comments by reading from the ABC show "20/20," June 25, 1999. This was an interview. The title was "Frontlines Food Lines," and I want to read just a few comments. First, I will start with the reporter, Tom Jarriel; and he says, "Military families re-deemed a huge \$21 million worth of WIC coupons in Defense commissaries last year. Even with that government help, the Millers cannot afford the insurance copayment to have their son's cavities filled."

I further want to quote an interview with David Lewis. David Lewis is a retired warrant officer and his quote is, "I think the biggest problem is that they just don't have enough."

Going back to Tom Jarriel again, the reporter for ABC's "20/20," and he says, "Retired warrant officer David Lewis, a hardened combat veteran of 26 years in the Marine Corps, teaches financial planning to thousands of Marines a year at Camp Pendleton." David Lewis further states, "At first it really bothered me that they did not have enough pride in themselves and I said," quoting David Lewis, "Well, wait a minute. It doesn't have anything to do with pride. It probably took more courage for that kid to get food. It probably took a lot of courage for that kid to say, I cannot take care of my family; I need help."

Tom Jarriel further states, "Lewis calculated that by total hours junior enlisted troops do not even earn minimum wage."

Madam Speaker, I want to read that again.

□ 1245

"Lewis calculated that by total work hours, junior enlisted troops do not even earn minimum wage."

Madam Speaker, that is why I am on the floor today, and I have been once a week ever since we got back in February.

I introduced H.R. 1055, which would help our men and women in uniform on food stamps. I am pleased to say today that there is strong bipartisan support. We have approximately 90 people who have signed this bill. I am encouraging our leadership, as well as the Democratic leadership, to please, let us not leave here in September or October and not speak to those who are serving our Nation, those who are willing to die for this country, that are on food stamps.

To me that is unacceptable. That to me is what I think America stands for, is to help those in uniform who are

willing to give their lives for this country.

What I have before me today is a Marine. This Marine is getting ready to deploy to Bosnia. We seem to be able to find \$9 million to \$10 million for Bosnia. We have already spent \$10 billion to \$11 billion in Yugoslavia. Yet, this cost to pass H.R. 1055 to get a \$500 tax credit for those on food stamps would only cost this government \$59 million over 10 years, roughly \$5 million a year.

I will be the first to say this will not get them off food stamps, but what I will say is that it will say to those in the military who are on food stamps that we in the Congress are concerned about the fact that they are on food stamps and they are willing to die for this country.

I look at the other bills that we pass in the Senate and the House, and we can find billions of dollars in tax credits for Tysons Food to study chicken manure and how this might help with energy problems. I say, let us take care of those first who are willing to take care of America. They are our men and women in uniform who are on food stamps.

I look at this little girl, Megan is her name. She is standing on the feet of her daddy. Do you know what, that serious look that she has, she is looking at a camera. In his arms he has his daughter Brittany. I am thinking about Megan. She does not know this at her age, but her daddy might not come back. He might not come back. He is willing to give his life for this country.

This Marine represents all of our military in both Air Force, Navy, Army, and Coast Guard that are willing to serve this Nation.

Madam Speaker, I hope that our leadership, working together with the Democratic leadership, will see that we do something to help men and women in uniform on food stamps. I want to close my comments by sharing with you and the other Members here on the floor today a simple poem but I think a very powerful poem that was written by a Marine, Father Dennis O'Bryan, United States Marine Corps.

His poem goes like this:

It is the soldier, not the reporter,
Who has given us freedom of the press.
It is the soldier, not the poet,
Who has given us freedom of speech.
It is the soldier, not the campus organizer,
Who has given us the freedom to demonstrate.
It is the soldier who salutes the flag,
It is the soldier who serves beneath the flag.

Madam Speaker, it is the soldier whose coffin is draped by the flag who allows the protester to burn the flag.

Madam Speaker, I close by saying to the leadership in the House, please, let us pass this legislation to help those men and women in uniform on food stamps.

LIVABLE COMMUNITIES IN VIRGINIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, this week there is a meeting in Norfolk, Virginia, of the unsung heroes of the efforts to promote Virginia's livability, the town planners and the citizen volunteers who are on the front lines doing one of the hardest jobs in terms of coping with the problems of growth and development and sprawl in Virginia, but sadly, they have fewer tools than almost any State in the country.

They know what to do, but despite those efforts, the State of Virginia has had unbalanced growth over the course of the last 15 years. The 1990s were a disaster. There was a failure in 1990 to adopt minimal State planning goals that would have helped provide form and direction.

In 1995, the legislature in Virginia overwhelmingly defeated Virginia's Strategic Planning Act. Today we have a State administration that is asleep at the switch, and a legislature that is not helping the people of Virginia. There is no tie-in between their transportation investments and land use. There is certainly a head-in-the-sand attitude regarding paying the bill.

Even if you are one of those people who still feel that we can pave our way out of traffic congestion, and that number is a smaller and smaller number across the country, because community after community has proven that we do not have enough concrete to pave our way out of congestion, but even if one believes that, in the State of Virginia there is no plan to deal with over \$50 billion of transportation investments that are conservatively required over the course of the next 20 years.

The Virginia Department of Transportation, VDOT, which is behind the curve as it relates to many of the transportation agencies around the country, was seriously damaged in the 1990s. There were ill-conceived programs of downsizing which ended up having a number of people who were terminated as retired, only to be hired back at higher salaries afterwards to try and move transportation projects along.

But I am pleased to say that there are some signs that things are happening in Virginia on the right side of the equation. First and foremost is that the citizens at the grass roots level are pushing back. There is increasing concern about unplanned growth.

In Loudon County we saw a sweep of eight smart growth candidates into county office, four Democrats, two Republicans, two Independents. It was a broad bipartisan effort to try and get back in control of their community.

There were other electoral wins in Fairfax, Prince William, in Stafford, in towns and cities across Virginia.

In the city of Suffolk there is an integrated comprehensive plan and zoning to direct growth towards designated areas that can handle it. The highly respected Mason-Dixon poll in March showed that growth is the number one issue in the Shenandoah Valley. Even the conservative newspaper, the *Richmond Times Dispatch*, has had a 180-degree change recently, and recently editorialized on behalf of planning smarter.

Madam Speaker, Virginia has given much to this country, the home of Thomas Jefferson, of George Washington. It was a leader in the democratic institutions for the entire world.

It is my hope that their Governor and that their legislature will stop denying the problem, will work with us in Congress, will work more importantly, with people at the grass roots level, all working as partners for livable communities. If they are willing to do so, to deal with those planners, with those citizen volunteers, with simple, commonsense steps and structure to make the planning process work better, Virginia communities will in fact be more livable and all our families can be safer, healthier, and economically secure.

MANY CENSUS QUESTIONS TOO INTRUSIVE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Madam Speaker, there are too many curiosity questions on the Census long form. Right now, on the average, one out of every six citizens of the United States that are sent the census long form are asked questions that take almost 25 minutes to fill out, very personal questions, very intrusive questions.

What we have been investigating and looking at is should there really be a \$100 fine if you refuse to answer all of those personal, intimate questions. It asks all sorts of information that the government does not need to know, such as the number of rooms in your house, when it was built, where your water and utilities come from, how much they cost, how much you paid for your house, the number of cars, telephones, bathrooms you have, how much insurance you carry on the contents of your home.

It asks about your education, the time you leave for work, how you get there, your health, your job. This is simply excessive, and I am suggesting a couple of things.

Number one, I suggest that there should not be a \$100 fine if you fill out the pertinent information. This was put in our United States Constitution so every 10 years we could have a new

count of the number of individuals in the United States so we could reapportion congressional districts for the 435 Members of Congress.

It was not the intent that we expand this to allow an administration, a bureaucracy, a Washington group to pursue all kinds of personal information that they might want to know sometime about you.

We are suggesting that if you fill out the forms and that if you fill out the number of people and their names, in essence, the questions on the short form, there should not be any fine, or any fine that would exceed \$5 or \$10.

I think with our new technology in this country, with the ability of government to know so much about us, knowing what doctors we go to, when we go to the doctor, for what reason we are going to the doctor, where we buy, what kinds of goods, where we travel, the danger is a government that, out of curiosity, would like to know more than they really need to know about our individual lives.

I am saying that we need to totally review the Census form. I hope the information that came out yesterday, that a Federal judge in Texas has said that there should be no prosecution for any individual that does not fill out the rest of the long form and those intrusive questions, is correct.

In the meantime, I think it is time that this body and the United States Senate, along with the administration, re-evaluate its intrusiveness. It is bad enough that we are taking 41 cents out of every dollar the average American makes in local, State, and Federal taxes. It is worse when we start getting into their lives, their bedrooms, to try to have the kind of information that we think we need to know to make that kind of policy decision.

It is time we slowed down the intrusiveness of the Federal government. It is time that Americans started asking their Representatives in Congress, in the United States Senate, I include in that, and their potential next President their position on this issue.

AMERICA'S HEALTH INSURANCE INDUSTRY FAILS INDIVIDUALS 55 TO 64

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I would just like to mention, in response to the comments of my friend, the gentleman from Michigan, that we could take care of these problems of what he calls intrusive government in the Census by allowing sampling, which is what many people on this side of the aisle have suggested, Census sampling, where we find out by taking some 10,000 or 20,000 or 50,000 or whatever number of people and find this information out and extrapolate it to the rest of the country, which every com-

pany and every government agency and every political candidate has done for years in terms of polling and all of that.

Madam Speaker, our health insurance system fails many Americans, no group more so than individuals age 55 to 64. There are 3.4 million Americans in this age range who are uninsured, the fastest growing segment of the uninsured population. Some of them were blind-sided when their employer terminated retiree health coverage. Others are self-employed or work for firms that do not offer health insurance.

Regardless of the reason behind their situation, the prospects of buying individual insurance in the individual market are grim. Only individuals enrolling directly from an employer-sponsored health plan are guaranteed access to private coverage. Companies can and do deny access to self-employed individuals and those whose employer does not offer coverage.

Even if an individual is lucky enough to be guaranteed access to a health plan, she is not guaranteed an affordable rate. As a matter of fact, she can bank on being quoted a rate so high it takes her breath away.

The purpose of health insurance is to pool risk, not to avoid it. The fact that individuals nearing retirement are priced out of the insurance market underscores how far our system has strayed from that basic tenet. Individuals 55 to 64 have entered a period in their lives when health insurance is particularly important, yet 3 million of them cannot secure coverage in the private health insurance market.

If this problem sounds familiar, there is a reason. Before Medicare, 60 percent of Americans 65 and older were uninsured. The public demanded that the Federal government step in when it became clear that insurers would not willingly cover these individuals.

Our challenge now is to help individuals 55 to 64. As long as health insurers can pick and choose those whom to enroll and whom to exclude, as long as they are permitted to use medical underwriting, rate increases, and skillful marketing to cream-skim, to weed out those they do not want to insure, as long as insurers can avoid those most in need of health care protection, there will always be significant gaps in our health insurance system.

□ 1300

It is one of realities this Nation faces in the absence of universal coverage. Eventually, the public will get tired of weak-kneed politicians and incremental strategies and the U.S. will implement that universal medical coverage. Until then, it makes sense to expand programs that work and to help those in most need of coverage.

That is where the Medicare Early Access program comes in. This week the gentleman from California (Mr. STARK), the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. THURMAN) and I will introduce revised legislation based on last year's