

awful lot of things. But it just continues.

How sad is it that we have AL GORE saying that his mother-in-law takes dog pills that actually cost less for the dog and more for him; and then when he is pushed on it, his staff says yes, it is not true, it is not true. It is just unbelievable, and it continues over and over again.

Mr. Speaker, we hear that there is not a prescription drug plan on the table. There is. We actually passed one. But because it does not socialize the dispensing of drugs in the Department of HHS, somehow, it is a mean-spirited plan.

Madam Speaker, I just hope that the Vice President, and I hope that my friends on the left, can actually refrain from the type of scare tactics that they have been engaging in for over 6 years, because it does not work. We have got grandmothers too. We have parents who depend on Medicare, who depend on Social Security, who depend on the type of things like, for instance, a bill that I was just able to see enacted into law this past week where we passed long-term health care. But we did it in a way that did not socialize long-term health care in a bureaucracy in Washington, D.C.

We did it in a way where the decisions are made locally. The decisions are made by doctors, by patients, by health care providers, and that is where we need to go. I certainly hope again that especially the Vice President, who seeks to be the next President of these United States, can refrain from these types of exaggerations that are clearly intended to distort the truth, clearly intended to scare senior citizens into believing that one group of people are for seniors and one group are against them. It may make him feel morally superior, but it is a lie; and also it is very insulting to those of us who believe that one can care for senior citizens without centralizing and socializing every single function in the Department of HHS.

We believe, we believe that people in our communities, people in the free market, that doctors, physicians, and senior citizens, can make intelligent choices also, with the benefit of the type of plan that we passed here several months ago. So hopefully, the fear mongering can be left behind, not only on the campaign trail, but also in this House. It is too important for our seniors, and it is too important for us.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair must remind all Members that although remarks in debate may level criticism against the policies of the President and the Vice President or against the nominated candidates for those offices, still, remarks in debate must avoid personality and, therefore, may not include personal accusations or characterizations.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. PICKERING) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PICKERING addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE HUNGER RELIEF ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Madam Speaker, as somebody who is on the left, on the other side of the aisle, I want to speak about an issue I think both sides can agree on.

Madam Speaker, in August, many of us in Congress were delighted by the catered cuisine served at various events during our party conventions. Yet, while we dined, 31 million Americans were either hungry or living under the specter of hunger. The economy is strong, unemployment is at a 30-year low, welfare rolls have been slashed. Still, every day in America, despite welfare reform or, perhaps, as some would say, because of it, there are families who need and use food stamps to eat. Every day in America, despite welfare reform or, perhaps, again, because of it, many go hungry, more have poor health, great numbers of our children, far too many, are unable to learn because they do not have enough to eat.

As we near the end of this Congress, we have a chance to change that shocking and scandalous situation.

I am so proud to have joined 181 of our colleagues in the House and 38 Senators, Democrats and Republicans, in support of legislation that focuses on food and takes notice of this Nation's nutritional needs. The Hunger Relief Act, H.R. 3192 in the House and S. 1805 in the Senate will help one in 10 families in our Nation who are affected by hunger.

There is evidence of hunger in 3.6 percent of all households in America. According to the report from Bread for the World, entitled "Domestic Hunger and Poverty Facts," 31 million people live in households that experience hunger or the risk of hunger. That number represents 1 in every 10 households in the United States. Close to 4 million children are hungry. Madam Speaker, 14 million children, 20 percent of the population of children, live in food-insecure homes. In food-insecure homes, meals are skipped, the size of meals are reduced; and again, according to the Bread of the World, sometimes the occupants of these homes go without food for a whole day.

More than 10 percent of all households in America are food insecure. Because there is such hunger and food insecurity, there is also infant mortality, growth stunting, iron deficiency, anemia, poor learning, and increased chances of disease. Because of such hunger and food insecurity, the poor are more likely to remain poor, the

hungry more likely to remaining hungry, and the sick are less likely to get well soon. It seems strange that we must fight for food for those who cannot fight for themselves.

Madam Speaker, hunger is a condition of poverty. It is really time for us to stop picking on the poor. Less than 3 percent of the budget goes to feed the hungry, and it is well documented that when we use our resources for food and nutrition, the health needs of this Nation's poor, it does make a difference.

For more than 3 decades now, the Food Stamp program has been a cornerstone of America's fight against hunger, and the first line of defense. Over the years, the program has been steadily improving, with the elimination of the requirement that food stamps be purchased, being one of the most significant breakthroughs. While many, too many continue to confront food insecurity, the situation today is far better than it was in 1960 when the Federal Government first began to focus on food. Similarly, the health consequences of this Nation's programs have experienced marked improvement. The data on birth rate, physical growth, and anemia is striking.

For example, the data shows that over a 20-year period, the incidence of physical stunting among preschool children decreased by 6.5 percent; and the improvement in the Nation's nutritional status indicates that while we need to continue our work, we can change the course of malnutrition among the poor and the needy. Over a 10-year period, according to the data, the percent of low-income households that meet 100 percent of the recommended dietary allowance grew twice as much as the improvement in the general population.

We are making progress, but we still have a long ways to go. That is why, Madam Speaker, Congress should and Congress must pass the Hunger Relief legislation before we go home this year. It is the least we can do, indeed, while we have such great prosperity.

TRIBUTE TO CHRISTOPHER GALE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEASE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding individual from my community. His name is Christopher Gale, he is 18 years old, and I have had the opportunity to spend some time with him over the last few days. Christopher was in Washington as part of the Boys and Girls Club National Youth of the Year competition. Christopher was the winner of the Midwest region. He is an outstanding young person from my hometown.

Mr. Speaker, he has been a member of the Boys and Girls Club of Holland, Michigan, for the last 9 years. Today,

he attends Western Michigan University where he intends on getting his degree in education and returning to the Holland community to teach history in his high school. At high school, he has been active in football, wrestling, baseball; he is also the president of the marching band in his spare time.

At home, he has been the role model for his younger brother and has also provided stability for his mother, who battles a physical disability. In his family, they have learned that love, compassion, and understanding are what has brought unity and strength to their family.

While in Holland, Christopher has been very active in volunteering for his community. He was awarded the Mayor's Youth Recognition Award for volunteering, by demonstrating his commitment to his neighborhood and the greater community. He volunteers on Project Pride, which is a community-wide cleanup effort. He has also helped with Little League; he has also helped with the West Ottawa Migrant program. So in addition to tutoring at school, in addition to tutoring his younger brother, in the summer he also tutors migrant children whose parents are working in the fields and whose parents travel from state to state. He has shown a great love for the next generation.

He is an active member of the Keystone Club, using his leadership skills again, what would you expect, to mentor young members of the Boys and Girls Club.

Christopher has been an outstanding contributor to the Holland community, to the community of west Michigan, and I am glad to be able to rise today and give this tribute to him and to say thank you for all that you have done for the community of Holland, the community of west Michigan, and to say congratulations for being the Midwest region winner this year.

EDUCATION IN TODAY'S WORLD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman, who we are proud of as a Hoosier; and, as he has announced his retirement this year, he will be missed.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about, in a bipartisan way, an issue that I think is the most important issue to my constituents in the great State of Indiana, whether I go to South Bend or Elkhart, La Porte or Michigan City or Middlebury or all over Indiana. Business leaders, parents, workers are talking about the importance of a great education system.

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It has been said, as education goes, so goes America. We need in this great hallowed Chamber to be able to discuss

in civil and bipartisan ways new ideas that will lead to a better education system.

Today in the Committee on Education and the Workforce, we were fortunate to have, not so much an expert on education issues as an expert on economic and fiscal issues, the chairman of the Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan testify before our committee.

We talked at length with Mr. Greenspan about how intimately education is tied to the health, competitiveness, the betterment of our civil society. We can have low inflation. We can have low unemployment rates. We can have low mortgage and interest rates. But if we do not have a prepared citizen rate, if we do not have great schools and quality teachers, if we do not have discipline in the schools and parents being involved in our children's education, then we are not going to have a continued productive economy.

So Mr. Greenspan was up before Congress to say to us, Democrats and Republicans alike, that we have to do a better job in math and science education and enticing our best and brightest people into teaching, whether that be at 18 years old or at 48 years old in mid career.

Now, I have a number of my colleagues that want to join us on the floor today to talk about the importance of education, some of the new ideas that we have talked about and fought for and articulated through the months.

We have talked about parental involvement which is one of the biggest indicators to success. We have talked about quality teachers and making sure that we get the best and brightest into the teaching profession.

We will talk a little bit more about a bill that the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DAVIS) and I have introduced to try to entice people who want to move from Main Street into our classrooms with math and science and technology expertise.

We will talk, maybe, a little bit about class size and how class size is such a large determinate about how effective a quality teacher can be. There is a huge difference between a class of 16 and a class of 26.

About professional development opportunities for our teachers, a recent survey indicated that 80 percent, 80 percent of those teachers that were polled said that they did not feel comfortable integrating technology into the curriculum and that they needed more opportunity for professional development.

We will probably talk a little bit about safe schools, drug-free schools, and discipline in our schools, and all of that within the context of local control of our schools, making sure there is accountability at the local level, that we give resources and we target programs for our local communities, and they make decisions.

So let me include some of my colleagues, Mr. Speaker. I know the gen-

tleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND), my good friend who serves on the Committee on Education and the Workforce, has talked at length about a number of these issues, including his concern for academy for principals and teachers, for leadership programs for these individuals running schools, about parental involvement in schools as being such an important indicator. He was in the committee hearing this morning when we had Mr. Greenspan.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND).

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROEMER) for yielding me this time and for allowing me to participate during this special order on what really should be the top priority, the top issue for this country of ours.

We have had a tremendous run with economic success and growth in recent years. We have heard testimony today from the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, Alan Greenspan, on the Committee on Education and the Workforce, very enlightening and in-depth testimony about the important role of ramping up the quality of education and the implications for maintaining economic growth and expanding the opportunity for economic achievement in this country.

We also had a wonderful second panel that testified as well with leaders in the education field who came, Mr. Haseltine, who is CEO of the Human Genome Science project; as well as Mr. Barrett, CEO of Intel Corporation talking about some of the innovative things that the private sector is doing to partner with the public sector to improve the quality of education.

There is no question that we face challenges as a Nation in order to meet the growth needs that this economy has, but to expand the opportunities for success for all people and especially for our children in this country as we embark on what appears to be an incredible journey in the 21st century of scientific discoveries and wonders that are hard to imagine at this time.

Mr. Haseltine from the Human Genome project, for instance, testified about the implications of not emphasizing enough math and science and engineering and technology in the classroom and the adverse effects that could have, then, on our ability to stay at the forefront of these discoveries.

I happen to think that it is, not only good economically to do this to prioritize education in the country, but there are national security implications as well.

I do not think it is too bold to predict today that, with the Human Genome project, the mapping of the human body, the possible discovery of water on Mars, and a moon off from Jupiter, and the tremendous amount of biotechnological discoveries, medical breakthroughs, scientific breakthroughs, we are probably going to see more of those discoveries in the next