

represent people back home. If there is a compelling issue, you offer an amendment to a piece of legislation and you hope to pass it.

I remember the amendment on mental health parity that I offered with Senator DOMENICI. It was an amendment on housing on the veterans appropriations bill.

Will the Senator from Nevada not agree with me that is the way the Senate has always conducted its business?

Mr. REID. The answer is yes. They have the right to offer amendments. Sometimes they offer an amendment and debate it.

I see my friend, who I came to Congress with in 1982, from Florida, the senior Senator from Florida. I have been talking about this H.R. 11. On that particular piece of legislation, the Senator from Florida offered five amendments.

The Senator from Florida had some good reasons to offer every one of these amendments. For example, you would ask: Why did he offer an amendment dealing with tractors to the Enterprise Zone Tax Incentive Act? I don't know. I am sure he had a good reason for doing so. They had a right to offer the amendments, and they offered them.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, on this particular piece of legislation that Senator COVERDELL introduced, which we have been debating, will the Senator from Nevada not agree with me that the kind of amendment, for example, I wanted to offer to this legislation dealing with the hunger of children, dealing with the poverty of children, dealing with how to deal with the violence in children's lives in their homes would not be considered to be by the definition of "relevant" relevant? Yet it affects education and children's lives. There have been hardly any opportunities over the whole last year to come out on the floor with amendments to different pieces of legislation. Is that not true? So it gets to the point where you can't even represent people back in the State as a Senator.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I believe there are times when we should enter into unanimous consent agreements to move legislation. We have been willing to do that. We have done that time after time in an effort to complete things that are important.

As I said earlier, I say to my friend from Minnesota, we need opportunities. It should be all the time, but I will settle for opportunities once in awhile to have a bill on which we can offer amendments. We might want to offer an amendment dealing with tractors. I should be able to do that.

CAPITOL HILL SECURITY

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I come to the floor to raise a question which I can't believe I have to keep raising over and over again.

Many of us attended the services for Officer Chestnut and Agent Gibson. They were part of the Capitol Hill po-

lice force. They were here every day not only protecting Senators and Representatives but the public. I started speaking about this before. We had the 1-week break. I want to come back to this again. This is the one issue on which I want to focus.

We made a commitment to do everything we could possibly do to make sure the officers were as safe as possible and would never have to go through this kind of hell again, for families and for loved ones, and that the public would be safe. Part of that commitment was the idea that surely at the different stations, especially those with the most public, we would have at least two officers.

This morning, again—I think it is the Second Street or C Street entrance, the barricaded part of the Hart Building—at about 10 o'clock in the morning when I came in there was one police officer with all sorts of people. There must have been about 20 people streaming in. That one officer is in peril, and the public is in peril.

I cannot believe we have not lived up to our commitment. I say to colleagues that it is pretty simple. I think the Senate Sergeant at Arms said this: A, we need to pass a supplemental appropriations bill so that you can use overtime in the short run to do the staffing so we have two officers at each one of these stations, or each one of these posts; and, B—I applauded the Senate Sergeant at Arms—we need to hire about 100 more officers so that on a permanent basis we can staff and have two officers at each one of these posts.

I am telling you, colleagues, what we have done is absolutely unconscionable, or what we have not done. How in the world can whoever makes these appropriations decisions—given all we have been through, given all of our concern and all of the commitment we have made, given the service we attended for the two officers who were slain—how can we not put the resources into this so our officers are safe, and, for that matter, so we are safe and the public is safe?

I for the life of me don't get it. I honest to goodness don't get it. I think that every day I am going to come out and mention this. I can't believe this.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

The Senator from Minnesota knows I support him on this issue. I am the only former Capitol Hill police officer serving in the Senate. I know the importance of the issue on which he has spoken. I followed the Senator on a number of occasions, and I back up everything he said. I agree with him.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Having talked to the Senate Sergeant at Arms, I think that Senators who care about this issue—and I think all do—need to make sure our voices are heard. We support the Capitol Police.

On the House side, there seems to be some slowness on a decision about whether or not we will pass through the supplemental appropriations bill

and whether or not we will do the job here.

I say to colleagues one more time, I think this is a scandal. I think it is an absolute scandal. We have two officers that have lost their lives. I believe we have made a commitment to the police officers and to their families. I think we have to do much better. It won't happen right away, but at least the decisions need to be made so we can do the staffing to make sure we have two officers at each post.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following Senator MACK, the Senator from South Carolina, Mr. HOLLINGS, be recognized for 15 minutes as if in morning business.

Mr. MACK. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we will make sure that Senator HOLLINGS has 15 minutes.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from South Carolina be allowed to speak for 15 minutes, following Senator MURKOWSKI. The Senator from Washington has agreed to allow the Senator to speak before him. That will be about 30 minutes from now.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GORTON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TANF SURPLUS SHOULD FIGHT POVERTY

Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, there was a press conference today held by the National Campaign for Jobs and Income. There were some very dramatic findings reported. This is directly relevant to the debate we were having with the majority leader. They reported today in a prosperous country, we still have about 35 million poor Americans and 13 million of those Americans are children. They reported that while the administration and other Senators and Representatives boast about having cut the welfare rolls in half, we actually have just made a small, hardly any, dent in reducing poverty.

Remember, the goal of the welfare bill was to move people from welfare to economic self-sufficiency.

They report that the poorest children in America are getting poorer. That is worth repeating: The poorest children in America are getting poorer.

They report there is a whole group of people, mothers and children, remaining in poverty. Many are families under tremendous stress and strain. Perhaps a mother has struggled with substance abuse; a mother who is a single parent has a severely disabled child; a mother has been battered, beaten up over and over again. About every 13 seconds in America, a woman is battered in her home.

There is precious little evidence these families will be able to move to work. Pretty soon, depending on the State, they will be pushed off a cliff.

We have no safety net left as a result of the welfare bill.

They report there is not one State in the country where the average earnings is even close to the poverty level income. The vast majority of the jobs are barely above minimum-wage jobs, and after 1 year the families lose their health care coverage and are not able to get good child care for their children, sometimes not any child care.

Given those findings, I think it should give Members pause that we are actually seeing an increase in the poverty of the poorest children in America; it should give Members pause.

It is amazing that State governments with the TANF money have about \$7 billion they have not spent—\$7 billion. There are all the needs for affordable child care, for training, especially for additional support services for families that are under unbelievable strain, are mainly women and children in need of affordable housing, sometimes transportation. All of this compelling need and these families are under tremendous pressure trying to survive under very difficult conditions, and the money we have allocated to these States, \$7 billion, is not being spent. Albeit, some of it can be put in a rainy day fund and maybe should be because who knows if the business cycle will stay up forever.

Six States—Connecticut, Kansas, Minnesota, New York, Texas, and Wisconsin—transferred \$800 million from the TANF surpluses to funding programs other than those that serve poor families. Quite often it ends up as general tax rebates, not to the poor. This year, Minnesota is doing much better with the TANF money. Last year, I am not proud of what the Minnesota Government did.

My point is simple:

No. 1, the amount of unspent TANF money in the States has reached \$7 billion, an enormous amount of money.

No. 2, this money has been unspent despite the persistent level of poverty that exists in our country, especially among women and children. And for children, the poorest of poor children, their poverty has increased and some of the States are not spending the money to help them.

No. 3, these low-income families are not receiving the services and the support they need to move out of poverty, which is what this bill was supposed to be all about.

No. 4, although some States are developing innovative programs, other States are diverting TANF money to pay for tax cuts or other programs that are not even targeted to the poor.

No. 5, in a time of unprecedented economic growth, there are all sorts of ways in which the States could be using this money to invest in children, to make sure that families can move from welfare to economic self-sufficiency, and they are not.

Conclusion: Don't we write the checks? Doesn't this money come from the Congress and the Federal Govern-

ment? I think we have the responsibility to ensure that the States are spending the TANF money in ways that meet the goals of the program, which is to move families out of welfare into jobs so they can support themselves.

We should insist that the TANF money is spent to help struggling families—not put into a surplus, or not to be given back as tax rebates to citizens across the board. I think it is an abuse of the program.

In this TANF reauthorization, that will be my work as a Senator. I hope other Senators will join. I oppose the bill. I am glad I oppose the bill. Those in favor of the bill should be the first to want to make sure the money is spent the way it is supposed to be spent. We should insist on accountability.

Second, I will come back with an amendment. That is what the debate with the majority leader is about. I am a Senator most vocal about having the right to bring amendments to this bill. I want an amendment that says we should have a policy evaluation of what is happening to the poor children.

Don't tell me that is not relevant to their education, but it wouldn't be relevant to this piece of legislation as defined by the definition of "relevant." It would be an amendment, and I do not have a right to offer that amendment—so says the majority leader.

But this is compelling. The poverty of children is compelling. The poverty of the poorest of children is compelling. As a Senator who spent most of his adult life working in many of these communities, I want to have some amendments that deal with the poverty of children and I want to have the right to introduce those amendments to this bill. As a Senator from Minnesota, I don't want to continue to be shut out, by the majority, of my right to come out here and fight for people. Basically, that has been the strategy for almost this whole last year.

I hope Democrats will, basically, not let themselves be rolled. I hope Democrats will say: As Democrats, as the minority party, we are going to insist on the same rights as the minority party had when we were the majority. It is a very important principle. But it is not just insider politics. It is all about whether or not, when you go home to your State and meet with people, and you know their problems, you want to do better for people—it is whether or not you can be a legislator and come out here with amendments and debate and fight for people for whom you want to fight. So if there is no agreement, I certainly hope the Democrats will support one another on what I think is a very important question.

Back to the substantive issue, I hope my colleagues will take a look at what is being done to this welfare bill with this TANF money. We have some troubling data from which we cannot turn our gaze. Most of these families who

are now working, 670,000 people, are no longer covered by medical assistance since this bill was passed because after 1 year they are off. Hardly any of these mothers have living-wage jobs. We just had a report a few weeks ago that the child care situation for their children ranges from dangerous to barely adequate. Just because they are poor children does not mean they are not entitled to good child care.

We have had this dramatic decline in food stamp participation. We have no idea why. It is certainly not because there has been much of a decrease in poverty. We see the rise of hunger and the use of food shelves in our country. But the States have \$7 billion they are sitting on. They came here and said: Trust us, just give us the money; we will do the best with it.

But quite often low-income families, poor families, whether they are people of color or white people, do not have much clout. It is up to us to say: We are a national community. There are certain values we hold dear. There are certain things as a national community we hold dear. One of them is, by gosh, there are going to be some standards everyone is going to have to meet because whether a child eats or not, whether or not there is decent housing, whether or not a family is able to make ends meet, whether or not children are able to look forward to a good life, should not depend on the State in which they live.

We make a commitment as a national community, especially to the most vulnerable citizens in our country, who are children, who are poor children.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Florida is recognized.

COMMEMORATING THE FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BROTHERS TO THE RESCUE SHOOTDOWN

Mr. MACK. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to commemorate four brave Americans. Theirs is a story of courage, it is a story of heroism, and it is a story of freedom.

Four years ago today, on February 24, 1996, Fidel Castro sent Cuban MiG fighters into the Florida Straits and killed Carlos Costa, Armando Alejandro, Mario de la Peña, and Pablo Morales.

These men were members of a humanitarian organization known as "Brothers to the Rescue." These volunteers search the Florida Straits for rafters. Too many Cubans die each year in their flight to freedom. The Brothers try to save lives.

So my thoughts and prayers today are with the families of the brave and courageous humanitarians who lost their lives 4 years ago. I know this day must be especially difficult for the families—today reminds them of the terrible loss suffered, and today also