

tremendous debt owed to the F-14s and their pilots who have fought over the years to ensure America's freedom.

GENEROSITY OF HAROLD L. AND DELORES K. BRAKE OF SAINT THOMAS, PENNSYLVANIA

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 24, 2002

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with you the generosity of Harold L. and Delores K. Brake of Saint Thomas, Pennsylvania, who gave \$500,000 to help build the Rhonda Brake Schreiner Women's Center, an affiliate of Summit Health. The center honors the memory of their daughter, Rhonda Brake Schreiner, who passed away April 7, 1999, after suffering from pancreatic cancer. During their daughter's struggle with the fatal illness, Harold and Delores realized the need for a medical center which concentrated on women's health issues.

The center offers diagnostic and support services to help women maintain good health. Mammography, stereotactic breast biopsy, bone density, ultrasound, and cardiology studies are provided through physician's referral. The center also houses a resource center, staffed by a clinically trained women's health coordinator, equipped with decision support tools, internet access, and educational materials to allow women to take an active role in preserving or restoring their health.

The Brakes made the pledge for the funding in September of 2000. They graciously fulfilled their commitment and were honored in January of 2001, when the Rhonda Brake Schreiner Women's Center opened. In the front hall of the center hangs a plaque honoring the Brake family which states, "The Rhonda Brake Schreiner Women's Center has been established in her memory through a gift from her parents, Harold and Delores Brake, and her brother, Randy. Through it, they want to encourage women to seek early detection and treatment necessary for a long, fulfilling life."

INTRODUCTION OF THE NEXT STEP IN REFORMING WELFARE ACT

HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 24, 2002

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, our work in helping people move from welfare to employment, and from poverty to a better way of life, is far from done. We must continue the progress States have made in promoting employment among welfare recipients, while also increasing our focus on job advancement and poverty reduction. To achieve these goals, I am introducing the Next Step in Reforming Welfare Act to reauthorize and improve the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and to enhance several related programs. I am proud to be joined by my Democratic colleagues on the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources, Rep-

resentatives STARK, LEVIN, McDERMOTT and DOGGETT, in sponsoring this important legislation.

As we approach the reauthorization of TANF, it is important to acknowledge the progress our Nation has made over the last six or seven years in reducing poverty and other critical social problems. For example, the percentage of children living in poverty in the United States has dropped to its lowest level since 1979. Unfortunately, even with that improvement, one out of every six children still lives in poverty.

Three developments are primarily responsible for these positive changes in the poverty rate. First, until recently, we have seen nearly unprecedented economic growth. Second, the work supports put in place by Congress, particularly the 1993 increase in the Earned Income Tax Credit, are now paying important dividends. And third, welfare reform has encouraged more low-income mothers to enter the workforce.

As impressive as these poverty reductions have been over the last few years, they pale in comparison to the decline in the welfare rolls over the same time period. This raises some troubling issues, not the least of which is the fact that many families are *not* leaving poverty when they leave welfare for work. Additionally, some families at the very bottom of the income scale may have lost ground over the last 5 years because of a reduction in various forms of public assistance.

This should raise a basic question for every Member of this body: is caseload reduction a goal unto itself, or is it a means to an end? I believe it must be the latter. In other words, we want people to leave welfare so they can lift their families out of poverty. To achieve that objective, we must continue the expectation that welfare recipients move toward employment. But at the same time, we must do more to help them escape poverty and move up the economic ladder. Both of these goals will undoubtedly be made more difficult by a slowing economy that is now shedding more jobs than it is creating. In fact, the current recession raises the stakes on our efforts since many recent welfare leavers may lose ground in their fight to escape poverty and current welfare recipients may find it even harder to leave the rolls for work unless we make some necessary improvements to TANF.

At its core, the Next Step in Reforming Welfare Act is driven by a philosophy that we should help people escape poverty through hard work. The TANF program is not, nor should it be, our only weapon to achieve this goal, but it must be an important part of our arsenal. Here are the eight steps our legislation would pursue to improve TANF and several other important poverty-related programs.

First, the legislation would maintain our financial commitment to the TANF program by increasing the current annual \$16.5 billion allocation by an inflation adjustment in coming years. Such an increase is necessary to stop the continual erosion in the real value of the States' TANF grants (which will be worth 22 percent less in FY 2007 compared to FY 1997 unless adjustments are made). Of course, some may suggest we should cut funding because of declines in TANF's cash caseload. However, three facts are in conflict with such a suggestion: (1) there are still many unmet needs that demand significant resources; (2) an increasing amount of TANF funds are

spent on work supports, rather than on direct cash assistance; and (3) the current recession will present new challenges to our welfare system. In addition to prospectively increasing the TANF grant for inflation, the bill would improve and extend the current supplemental grants for States with low Federal funding per poor child, the annual work-based performance bonuses and the contingency fund, which would be redesigned to provide real assistance to State TANF programs during economic downturns.

Second, the bill would include poverty reduction as an explicit goal in the welfare reform law, and States should be given financial bonuses if they reduce child poverty. Broadening the goals of TANF and providing financial bonuses would encourage States to consider developing new approaches and providing additional assistance to help struggling families. Furthermore, under the bill, a conciliation process would be required before a TANF recipient's benefit can be sanctioned, funding for the Social Services Block Grant would be restored to \$2.8 billion a year, and the current caseload reduction credit would be replaced with an employment credit, which would reward States for moving people from welfare to work, rather than for people simply exiting welfare.

Third, the current requirement that TANF recipients be working or enrolled in related employment activities would be continued. However, additional incentives and rewards for work would be established, including not counting TANF payments to recipients' with earnings towards the five-year time limit (such payments would be considered wage subsidies). The legislation also would make a dramatic new investment in the Child Care and Development Block Grant (an additional \$11.25 billion over 5 years) to ensure that both welfare leavers and the working poor have access to quality and affordable day care.

Fourth, State TANF plans would have to include goals for improving earnings for TANF recipients and leavers, and new demonstration projects (\$150 million per year) would be established to increase wages for low-wage workers and to improve employment outcomes for welfare recipients with multiple barriers. Additionally, to promote the skills needed for employment advancement, the legislation would eliminate the current cap on the number of TANF recipients who can be enrolled in vocational education and still count towards the participation requirement.

Fifth, the bill would take a series of steps to encourage family formation and responsible parenting. For example, the measure would create a new fund (\$100 million a year) to promote the best practices on promoting the formation of two-parent families, reducing teenage pregnancy, and helping low-income, non-custodial parents support their children. Furthermore, the legislation would encourage States to pass through more child support to families, rather than retaining those collections to recoup past welfare costs.

Sixth, the legislation would revise the harsh immigrant provisions in the 1996 law by restoring TANF and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) eligibility to non-citizens who are legally residing in the country (with a requirement that their sponsor's income be deemed available to them for a certain period of time).

Seventh, the bill would maintain State accountability under TANF by extending the current maintenance-of-effort requirement (plus an inflation increase), and by requiring States to generally use Federal funds to supplement, rather than replace, State funding in various low-income programs.

Eight and finally, the measure would call for increased information about State TANF programs and about the status of welfare leavers.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we can pursue these eight goals while maintaining the State general discretion to tailor their own TANF policies. Furthermore, I am hopeful these suggestions can attract bipartisan support on the basis that promoting work and reducing poverty are goals that hopefully draw near universal approval. I look forward to working with the Administration and with all of my colleagues on a TANF reauthorization bill designed to reward work, reduce poverty, and increase self-sufficiency.

SUPPORTING THE NEXT STEP IN REFORMING WELFARE ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 24, 2002

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the “Next Step in Reforming Welfare Act” for which I am an original cosponsor.

In 1996, I vehemently opposed the “Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Act,” which changed our nation’s welfare system, because it removed an important safety net for the poor and the most vulnerable in our society. I still hold these views today.

However, I support the “Next Step in Reforming Welfare Act” because—unlike the 1996 law—this new legislation improves our national safety net and actually helps the poor and most vulnerable in our society. This bill increases funding for TANF, redirects the goal of the program to that of poverty reduction, rewards work, provides new funding for work support programs, like child care, and encourages states to better assist hard-to-serve TANF recipients.

The “Next Step in Reforming Welfare Act” increases the TANF block grant by inflation, and more than doubles child care funding so that more families are able to go to work.

This legislation appropriately redirects the goal of the TANF program to reducing poverty. This replaces the draconian idea that the purpose of welfare is to kick TANF recipients off the rolls as fast as possible. The bill accomplishes this by making child poverty reduction an explicit goal of TANF and by providing \$150 million each year in incentive grants to states who reduce child poverty.

Another important focus of this legislation is its commitment to increasing quality childcare to current and former TANF recipients. The bill triples the portion of the Child Care Development Block Grant available for this purpose. Additionally, the bill requires that all TANF funding used for childcare only be used in facilities that meet state health and safety standards. It also increases the age for which childcare must be available for children from 6 to 13 years old.

This bill directs resources to TANF recipients who suffer from disabilities, substance

abuse, domestic violence, and lack of proficiency in English. It requires states to assess and screen recipients to determine if they need rehabilitative or educational services to go to work. It also provides families in these situations a chance to get on their feet by allowing rehabilitative services to count as a work activity for six months.

These changes in TANF are a first step toward improving our welfare system so that it truly helps poor working families and gives them not just a safety net, but also springboard out of poverty. I hope that my colleagues in the House will work with me to make TANF a program we can all be proud of.

SALUTING FIRST LIEUTENANT JOHN P. PARKER

HON. JAMES A. BARCIA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 24, 2002

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to First Lieutenant John P. Parker upon his retirement as Commander of the Bay City Post of the Michigan State Police. John’s exemplary work ethic and can-do attitude have served as standards of optimism, hard work and determination for his fellow officers, friends, neighbors and all who have come into contact with him during his 27-year career with the Michigan State Police and his more than eight years in charge of the Bay City post.

As a law enforcement officer, devoted father and contributor to our community, John has always impressed others with his lead-by-example approach to any venture he has undertaken. A Lansing native, John began his law enforcement career in 1974 as a radio dispatcher in the Jackson post. After graduating from the police academy in 1977, John served briefly with the Bad Axe post as a trooper before being assigned to the Detroit Freeway post. He later worked in Lansing and Brighton. In 1992, John earned a promotion to First Lieutenant and took command of the Sandusky Post, where he served for a year until his transfer to Bay City.

When John took command of the Bay City post, he had his work cut out for him to restore morale and train a professional core of new troopers to bring the post up to full strength. John modestly credits the sworn officers and civilian staff who have worked for him with rebuilding the post, but he deserves praise for leading the effort. Today, John and those under his command can point proudly to having transformed the Bay City post into one of the more widely respected posts in the state. John’s strong sense of duty and superior managerial skills clearly sparked the engine that has driven the Bay City Post to be ranked among the best in the state.

Never one to sit on the sidelines, John also found time to devote to civic, religious and fraternal organizations to serve our community and his fellow citizens. His participation in these organizations, which include the Board of Director of the Bay County Crime Stoppers, the Tri-County Adjudication Program Board of Directors and Knights of Columbus Council 4232, have made a real difference and he should be commended for his involvement. John’s wife, Kathy, and his four sons, John, Scott, Chris and Michael, also deserve high

praise for their unselfish support of John in his career goals and his volunteer work.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing gratitude to First Lieutenant John P. Parker for his distinguished service and in wishing him success in all future endeavors. John will no longer carry a badge, but I am confident that the honor and integrity he displayed during his tenure with the Michigan State Police will continue to serve as evidence that he exemplifies the very best values of the men and women in law enforcement.

TRIBUTE TO COL. EDWARD RICE, JR.

HON. JOHN R. THUNE

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 24, 2002

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Col. Edward Rice, Jr. on his promotion to Brigadier General.

Col. Rice commands the 28th Bomb Wing at Ellsworth Air Force Base in my home state of South Dakota, with 27 B-1 bombers and more than 3,500 military and civilian members.

A graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1978, the Colonel is a command pilot with more than 3,600 flying hours in aircraft such as the B-1B, B-52 and B-2. Throughout this distinguished career, Col. Rice has held numerous key operational and staff positions.

Most recently, Col. Rice returned from commanding B-1 and B-52 operations during Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. The B-1 bomber has been involved in every aspect of the most precise, intense bombing campaign in history, flattening terrorist targets and taking out Taliban strongholds. Col. Rice’s bombers were the key to winning in Afghanistan.

Upon his return, Col. Rice stated, “All of us who wear the uniform understand we may be sent into combat. We all know that when duty calls, we’ll stand and do what we’ve been trained to do.” That spirit is what makes the U.S. military the best in the world and Col. Rice one of its finest examples.

Yesterday when I spoke with Col. Rice, I was reminded again of what a quality individual he is and what a tremendous asset he is to our country. I am proud of the important role he played in directing missions in the skies above Afghanistan. Mr. Speaker, for all the sophistication of these bombers, we know it is people like Col. Rice who truly help get the job done. I’m proud of how well he represents South Dakota.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Col. Rice for his performance in Operation Enduring Freedom, thank him for his service and congratulate him on his promotion to Brigadier General.

INDIA’S REPUBLIC DAY, JANUARY 26, 2002

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 24, 2002

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of the most important dates