

must take on a greater share in the costs of the project.

The bill requires independent review of Corps projects. The National Academy of Sciences, the General Accounting Office, and even the Inspector General of the Army agree that independent review is essential to assure that each Corps project is economically justified.

The bill also requires strong environmental protection measures. S. 2188 requires the Corps to mitigate the environmental impacts of its projects in a variety of ways, including by avoiding damaging wetlands in the first place and either holding other lands or constructing wetlands elsewhere when it cannot avoid destroying them. The Corps requires private developers to meet this standard when they construct projects as a condition of receiving a federal permit, and the federal government should live up to the same standard.

Too often, the Corps does not complete required mitigation and actually enhances environmental risks. I feel strongly that the Corps must complete its mitigation and the public should be able to track the progress of mitigation projects. In addition, the concurrent mitigation requirements of this bill would actually reduce the total mitigation costs by ensuring the purchase of mitigation lands as soon as possible.

This bill streamlines the existing automatic deauthorization process for the \$58 billion project backlog, and it will keep the Corps focused on its primary missions of flood control, navigation, and environmental protection. Under the bill a project authorized for construction but never started is deauthorized if it is denied appropriations funds towards construction for 5 straight years. In addition, a project that has begun construction but been denied appropriations funds toward construction for 3 straight years is deauthorized. The bill also preserves congressional prerogatives over setting the Corps' construction priorities by allowing Congress a chance to reauthorize any of these projects before they are automatically deauthorized. This process will be transparent to all interests, because the bill requires the Corps to make an annual list of projects in the construction backlog available to Congress and the public at large.

This measure will bring about a comprehensive revision of the project review and authorization procedures at the Army Corps of Engineers. My goals for the Corps are to increase transparency and accountability, to ensure fiscal responsibility, and to allow greater stakeholder involvement in their projects. I remain committed to these goals, and to seeing Corps reform enacted as part of this Congress' water resources bill.

I feel that this bill is an important step down the road to a reformed Corps of Engineers. This bill establishes a

framework to catch mistakes by Corps planners, deter any potential bad behavior by Corps officials to justify questionable projects, end old unjustified projects, and provide planners desperately needed support against the never-ending pressure of project boosters. Those boosters, include congressional interests, which is why I believe that this body needs to champion reform—to end the perception that Corps projects are all pork and no substance. All too often Members of Congress have seen Corps projects as a way to bring home the bacon, rather than ensuring that the taxpayers get the most bang for their Federal buck.

I wish it were the case that the changes we are proposing today were not needed, but unfortunately, I see that there is need for this bill. I want to make sure that future Corps projects no longer fail to produce predicted benefits, stop costing the taxpayers more than the Corps estimated, do not have unanticipated environmental impacts, and are built in an environmentally compatible way. This bill will help the Corps do a better job, which is what the taxpayers and the environment deserve.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EVERYONE ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 4, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4) to reauthorize and improve the program of block grants to the States for temporary assistance for needy families, improve access to quality child care, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Boxer/Kennedy amendment No. 2945, to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 60 minutes equally divided between the chairman and ranking member of the Finance Committee.

The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise in support of the amendment offered by Senators BOXER and KENNEDY to raise the minimum wage.

The last time we increased the minimum wage was in 1997, and workers have already lost all of those gains of that increase. To have the purchasing power the minimum wage had in 1968, the minimum wage would have to be more than \$8 an hour, not the \$5.15 today.

In 1968, we could afford it. In 1968, we could provide the wages that would en-

able Americans to save for homes, to purchase homes, to save for college education, and to educate young people. Today, working Americans do not have that opportunity because the minimum wage is not sufficient to support a family and support the aspirations that all Americans have to better themselves and their children.

Indeed, what is very startling is if we had increased the minimum wage at the same rate CEO compensation had increased, the minimum wage today would be \$22 an hour. In fact, it raises the fundamental question we will address over many months and years ahead, which is whether the rest of the world is going to become like the United States with a strong middle class with opportunities to move forward or will we become more like the rest of the world with a huge divergence between the very wealthy and those who are working for very little.

I believe we have to have a society that continues to produce a strong middle class, that continues to make work something that allows an individual to provide for their families and to aspire to all of the dreams of American home ownership, education for their children, and a comfortable and secure retirement.

Indeed, the fact that the minimum wage has relatively decreased has contributed to a doubling of poverty. A minimum wage earner for a family of three who works 40 hours a week 52 weeks a year earns \$10,700. That is \$4,500 below the poverty line. Today, if you are working 40 hours a week for minimum wage, you are in poverty.

The proposed increase would bring the minimum wage to \$7 an hour, and even this modest increase would only raise the annual salary of families to about \$14,000.

It is not sufficient to replace what people had in 1968. It is not sufficient to ensure all families are above poverty. But increasing the minimum wage will at least give more opportunity, more hope, and more sustenance to the families in America.

Today, one in five children lives below the poverty line in our Nation. This is the richest Nation in the world. That poverty has an effect on them; indeed, in the long run, it has an effect on everyone. There is an adage: You can pay now or you can pay later. We are not paying now and we will pay later. We pay later in terms of children who do not have the educational skills or the health to become the most constructive workers in our society they could become. In fact, some of them, unfortunately, wander into crime and other areas which cost us immensely. We have to be able to ensure people can afford to live in this country.

One of the other aspects of the minimum wage is a family earning a minimum wage in this country cannot effectively afford a two-bedroom apartment in any of the major metropolitan areas and in many rural areas. That is unfortunate. Without proper housing,

how can one ensure family stability and the opportunity to move up in society?

We all understand and we all praise the hard-working Americans who, day in and day out, go to their jobs and labor for their families and communities. But too many of them are working at wages that do not reward this great effort. We can do something and should do something about that by increasing the minimum wage.

We should recognize and understand by increasing the minimum wage, we are not likely to have any negative impact on our economy. In fact, we will probably stimulate our economic activity. In the 7 years after the last minimum wage increase was enacted, there were nearly 11 million new jobs added at the pace of 218,000 jobs per month. There was no break in employment because the minimum wage went up. There were more Americans with more disposable income, buying more goods and services in our economy.

Most people, through my experience, who are working in jobs that pay the minimum wage or slightly above the minimum wage, tend to spend a good deal of their income on taking care of children, on taking care of their rent, on taking care of things that put money into our economy today.

We have to do this. Indeed, it would benefit our economy, not just those recipients of increased wages.

There are about 7 million workers and a third of working women who will benefit. I hope we can move forward and ensure this minimum wage is increased.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, we are facing a filibuster on an amendment I offered with Senator KENNEDY, with great support across the board. I thank Senator REED for his support of this very simple amendment.

We are facing a filibuster on whether we can vote on raising the minimum wage. I cannot think of a more cruel filibuster in my life. Why on Earth would anyone, Republican or Democrat, try to block a vote on this very important matter? I hear all about compassionate conservatism. Fine. Show it to me. Where is it?

People at the minimum wage have been stuck there for 7 years. That is how long it has been since we raised it. Give us a chance to have an up-or-down vote on raising the minimum wage. I ask my colleagues to try and live on \$10,800 a year. Think about your rent or your mortgage payment. If it is \$800 a month, that is it. You use up all of your money.

Some Members say we are trying to raise it way out of proportion. We are not. It is a rather modest increase, from \$5.15 to \$7 an hour.

I will show a few charts that tell the story better. People who work at the minimum wage are working well below the poverty line. This red line on this chart is the poverty line for a family of

three. A family of three is way below the poverty line. They are headed straight down, as shown on this chart. I do not understand why we want to keep people below the poverty line.

Nearly three-quarters of minimum wage workers are adults. We are not talking about kids. When I was a kid, I used to work at the minimum wage. Fine. It was great. I made 50 cents an hour. That gives away my age. Imagine if those Members of the Senator were still in the Senate. We would still have a minimum wage of 50 cents an hour. My goodness, we need to raise the minimum wage.

Seventy-two percent are adults. How can we look at these people and tell them they do not deserve an increase? By the way, they will still be below poverty even after we raise them to \$7.

Every day we delay, minimum wage workers fall further behind. All the gains of the 1996 minimum wage increase have been lost already. The time is long overdue that we raise the minimum wage.

People are working hard but losing ground. The real value of the minimum wage: Today it is worth \$4.98. That is what hard-working people are getting, \$10,800 a year for a family of three. With our minimum wage increase, there would be a \$3,800 yearly increase in wages. That would pay far more than 2 years of childcare.

We talk about how important this welfare bill is. As a matter of fact, my friend from Pennsylvania had a chart showing how wonderful it has been that children have been lifted out of poverty. Of course, we are seeing now an increase in poverty. During the Clinton years, that was true. There were so many jobs, 22 million jobs created, compared to 3 million jobs lost under Bush. Kids were lifted out of poverty.

This minimum wage increase would give children more childcare. That is important. It provides 2 years of health care; provides full tuition for a community college degree; provides a year and a half of heat and electricity; provides more than a year of groceries; provides more than 9 months of rent.

When we give to people at the lower echelon an increase in the minimum wage, they will spend it, and that will fuel our economic recovery. I ask our friends on the other side, Why are you opposing us?

We will look at which Presidents have signed minimum wage increases into law: FDR, Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, Republican; John Kennedy, Democrat; Lyndon Johnson, Democrat; Gerald Ford, Republican; James Carter, Democrat; George H.W. Bush, Republican; William Clinton, Democrat.

The people who are trying to stop an increase in the minimum wage are going against a whole array of Democratic and Republican Presidents. Our increase is quite modest as shown by my chart.

American families are suffering since the Bush administration took hold.

Look what has happened: 13 million children hungry; 8 million Americans unemployed; 8 million workers losing overtime. That is what they want to do. There are 7 million low-wage workers, some waiting 7 years for a minimum wage increase. All we want is an up-or-down vote. They are filibustering it. There are 3 million more Americans in poverty since President Bush took office and 90,000 workers a week losing unemployment benefits.

I hope compassionate Senators on both sides of the aisle, I hope savvy Senators on both sides of the aisle, will definitely allow a vote on this very simple proposition. Seven years ago we raised the minimum wage. It is time to do it again.

Take it to the people in your States. Ask them how they feel. The polls are overwhelming. More than 70 percent of the people want to see an increase in the minimum wage. Yet in this Chamber, one would think we are asking for something that makes no sense. We want to get people off of welfare. That is the point of the underlying bill. Let's get them into work that pays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I retain the remainder of our time on this side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would ask the Senator from California—she suggested we are not going to allow a vote. I would be very happy to allow a vote. We suggested we would be happy to give a vote on the issue of minimum wage. But I think it is important, if we are going to give a vote on a "message amendment"—that is the term that has been used by Members on your side of the aisle, a message amendment—we would be happy to give you a vote on your message amendment in exchange for you giving us a vote on something that is actually going to help people in poverty; that is, passage of this bill and going to conference. In fact, we have offered to the Democratic leader that in exchange for a vote on your message amendment, you allow us to pass and go to conference on a bill that is actually going to help low-income people get out of poverty.

So I would be happy to offer, as I did yesterday, a unanimous consent request to give you a vote on your amendment, in exchange for you allowing us to have a vote on passage, at a time certain, and a commitment to go to conference on this legislation.

I ask the Senator: Would you agree to such a proposal?

Mrs. BOXER. Thank you very much for asking. We are ready to vote on the minimum wage right now. We do not need any more debate time.

Mr. SANTORUM. I would be happy to—

Mrs. BOXER. The message we are sending is to the people in America

who need to have an increase. That is the message. We want to have that vote.

Mr. SANTORUM. Reclaiming my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania has the floor.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that we have a vote on the minimum wage Boxer amendment, followed by a vote on the McConnell amendment on minimum wage, and then a vote on passage of the welfare reform bill, with the appointment of conferees, three Republicans and two Democrats. And then, on top of that, let's get everything done. Let's move, then, to the FSC/ETI bill, have a commitment to pass that bill by Thursday of next week, and a final vote, let's say, at 5 o'clock on Thursday.

So if you are committed to getting things done and helping manufacturing jobs, and you are committed to helping get welfare reform done, I offer that as a unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mrs. BOXER. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. I say to my friend, there are a series of amendments that are important to the working people of this country. Overtime—the Bush administration is trying to take away overtime—we want a vote on that. The unemployment insurance, which has run out for millions of Americans, we want a vote on that. There are a series of amendments that deal with making lives better for the people.

Mr. SANTORUM addressed the floor. The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator object?

Mrs. BOXER. This Senate is not the House. We are Senators. We are free to offer amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator object?

Mrs. BOXER. I absolutely would agree if he would modify his request. We can agree on time agreements for these and keep it open for the rest of the amendments, and then we will agree.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator object?

Mrs. BOXER. I object, as he has done it. But I will agree to modify it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. SANTORUM. Senator FRIST has offered to the Democratic leader a vote on all three of the amendments that the Senator from California asked for; that is, minimum wage, the issue of overtime, as well as the issue of unemployment insurance. We have agreed to votes on all three of those amendments, in exchange for votes on two things we would like to do; that is, pass a welfare reform bill that is actually going to help reduce poverty in America, help stabilize and build families, reconnect fathers with their chil-

dren, and to pass a JOBS Act otherwise known as the FSC bill, which will help manufacturers compete in the international marketplace, save jobs, and create new jobs, and avoid harmful tariffs which are now in the process of being assessed against American workers by the European Union.

We have agreed to pay a ransom, to get two victims returned. The victims of the filibuster are the victim of welfare and the JOBS Act to help create manufacturing jobs. But we are not going to pay a ransom and not get a victim back. We are not going to pay a ransom to have votes on theme or message amendments and not get back for the American public two things that are absolutely necessary to help alleviate poverty and create jobs. This is not just going to be a political exercise.

The leader and the Republicans want to get things done. We are not here to message for Presidential politics. We are here because we want to do a job for the American people. We have a welfare bill that has worked—the 1996 welfare bill.

I will quote—by the way, not a Republican—June O'Neill, who was at the Congressional Budget Office, who said:

Politicians and experts from the left and the right acknowledge that welfare reform has succeeded beyond the most optimistic expectations.

The 1996 Welfare Act, which Members on the other side of the aisle say: "We are not trying to block. Oh, yes, we'll eventually get to it"—they say they are not trying to block it, so what do they do? Right out of the box, they offer an amendment and say: You either give us a vote on this amendment or we can't move forward on the bill.

They did not wait until we worked our will, until we had several amendments we were trying to work through. There are supposedly 30 germane amendments on the other side of the aisle. They did not wait to offer their 30 germane amendments. They did not work through the process.

Right out of the box comes an amendment that has nothing to do with welfare, that we said, from the very beginning, if you offer this amendment, then we will be happy to vote on it in exchange for a commitment to finish this bill. But no. No. We have to get our message amendments out. Why? Because I believe there are many on the other side of the aisle who do not want a welfare bill, who want message amendments instead of improving a bill that we know works for the American public.

Now, why would I say that? Well, let's listen to the Senator from Massachusetts, 8 years ago, on the floor of the Senate, dealing with this first welfare bill that we are trying to reauthorize and modestly improve. I underscore modest. This is not a major revamp of welfare in this bill. There are some modest improvements, tinkering, because we know what is out there is working. We want to make sure what has been put in place stays in place and

make some minor tinkering to try to improve it. That is why this bill came out of the committee in a bipartisan basis, because these are not major changes. These are minor changes which amplify what we know has already been working out among the States.

But what did the Senator from Massachusetts say about this bill in 1996, which he voted against?

These provisions are a direct assault on children and have nothing at all to do with meaningful reform.

Let's see if they had anything to do with a direct assault on children. Children in America who were at the highest poverty rates, when this bill passed, were African-American children. Let's see if Senator KENNEDY's assault, as he termed it, came to be. No. Wrong. The assault was on poverty, not on children. The assault that Senator KENNEDY foretold never happened. Over 40 percent of poverty was among African-American children in 1996. Now the rate of poverty among African-American children is the lowest ever recorded—the lowest ever recorded. Why? Because this bill works. Why? Because requiring work works. That is what this bill did. And that is what Senator KENNEDY was vehemently against—vehemently against.

He goes on to say:

Here we are talking about American children living in poverty, the innocent victims of fate.

"[T]he innocent victims of fate."

If this bill passes, they will be the innocent victims of their own Government.

Let me change that around. For 30 years, African-American children in poverty were the innocent victims of their Government, in programs created by the Senator from Massachusetts, which locked them in poverty. And we have the courage on this floor to say: Stop this "compassion" that is killing America's children. We stood up and said, just because you are poor, you are not disabled, that we do not have a prejudice against you because you are poor, but we believe you can achieve just like the rest of Americans, if given the chance.

So we passed a bill that fundamentally changed the structure that the Senator from California and the Senator from Massachusetts, and far too many others, believed was the best for children—well-meaning but very wrong.

Instead of admitting this is the proper course, they now offer an extraneous amendment, having nothing to do with welfare, to block this hugely successful program in helping millions of families—millions of families—get off of welfare. How many millions? Two point eight million families. So 2.8 million families who used to get a welfare check now bring home a paycheck.

You ask, How big a difference is that in our world? I will give you a story of a young lady who told her story. She works for CVS. She had been on welfare for many years. She said after she

had her first week of work and got her first paycheck, all of the children piled into her car and wanted to go to the store. Why? They wanted to go to the store because they wanted to go through the checkout line and have their mom pay with cash instead of food stamps. They wanted not to feel looked at as someone who was using the person behind them and their money to help pay for their food, but they had earned it themselves.

You don't think that has an impact on a little child's life? You don't think that being dependent upon the Government has an impact on the psychology of little children who grow up in that environment? Do you think we are doing people a favor by saying, We will take care of you?

If we don't pass this welfare reform bill today, the majority of Americans on welfare will no longer have a work requirement. If we don't pass a welfare reform bill, a majority of Americans on welfare will be in the old welfare system prior to the reform in 1996.

You say, well, this bill doesn't really make any difference? It makes a huge difference because the incentives will not be there anymore. I can't tell you the number of welfare mothers I have talked to. As I mentioned before, we have employed nine in my State office. I have worked personally, hand in hand, in trying to deal with the difficulties of taking people from welfare to work. It makes an enormous difference in their lives. They have said to me, one after another: I probably would not be where I am today had welfare reform not passed and the Government changed their expectation of me. I had to look at myself differently. It forced me to do something I never had the courage to do because to get that first job is scary.

It is a frightening thing, if you have very little skills, to go out and hold yourself up to failure. Let's be honest. Remember your first job. You knew nothing about what it meant to work. You knew nothing. How did you sign up? Where did you get your paycheck? What timecard did you fill out? There are so many things in the world of work that you have no concept of if you have no experience in it. That first job can be frightening, particularly if you are unskilled. Taking that first step or staying at home and letting the Government send you a check, that is an option that far too many people took.

Well, we didn't allow that in this bill. And it was not cruel. It was a step in the right direction for 2.8 million families, 2.3 million children out of poverty, 700,000 African-American children out of poverty. And we are blocking a bill that would make this a reality for future generations of people who may have to go through the welfare system?

I yield the floor to the Senator from Iowa. I thank the chairman for his tremendous effort in bringing this bill to the floor and fighting to get it through cloture and on to passage and to re-

ality. He has been a warrior for children on this issue. I thank him for his work.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank the Senator from Pennsylvania for managing the bill while I had to be in a conference to work out compromises on the pension bill. But more importantly, going back to his days in the House of Representatives, he has been a trailblazer in the cause of moving people from welfare to work so that those people have an opportunity to move themselves up the ladder.

Families on welfare and low-income families need childcare, and they need it now. This bill will help do that. If Democrats obstruct passage of this welfare bill, we risk losing a significant opportunity to substantially increase childcare funding for welfare families as well as for poor working families. If we simply continue the level of childcare funding under current law, hundreds of thousands of children and working families will lose their childcare. Estimates have been made that nearly 225,000 children could lose childcare assistance by the year 2006, and more than 360,000 children could lose it by the year 2008.

Is that what the Democrats want? Is that what they stand for in their vote against cloture on this legislation? That is playing politics on the welfare bill, and playing politics will not get this bill passed.

This bill is good policy. Democrats know that. And good policy is good politics.

Let me be clear: If Democrats succeed in their efforts to derail consideration of the welfare bill, hundreds of thousands of children will lose childcare. In other words, in order to score political points, Democrats are leaving poor children and their working single moms out in the cold. Without additional childcare resources, many States will be forced to make painful childcare cuts or institute waiting lists or increase copays.

If childcare funds are not available, low-income families, working families trying to do the right thing will be unable to help pay for childcare. Children work; children suffer. Or else children don't suffer and parents don't work.

Under this situation, they would be forced to resort to inadequate, unstable, probably unsafe childcare arrangements, or even be forced to give up their jobs and return to welfare, all so that political points can be made. That doesn't make sense to me, especially for a party that brags about putting the care of the people in need uppermost in their platform.

I think that is shameful. Democrats ought to be ashamed of themselves for making political hay on the backs of these low-income people.

In addition to the loss of childcare funding increases, if we are not able to

enact this legislation—and you have to have cloture to get to finality, or else you have to have an agreement on the number of amendments and their germaneness to move ahead. So without one or the other, we are not able to enact welfare reform. In addition, we would also fail to make needed improvements to child support enforcement programs. We would fail to provide transitional medical assistance for 5 years as well as give States access to the contingency funds they have not been able to use because we liberalized States' access to those contingency funds. We leave States in the dark about what a reauthorization bill next year would look like. Why leave 50 State legislatures in a lurch when if we acted, they can put their State programs in place and move on with certainty?

When this is all added together—and there are a lot of other things we could say—it is an extraordinarily irresponsible policy that ends up with the lack of finality on the part of this Senate on welfare reform.

But then maybe welfare reform has never been a priority for Democrats. In the 107th Congress, even though my friend, Senator BAUCUS, reported a bill out of committee with \$5.5 billion for childcare, welfare never made it to the floor of the Senate. This year, the Senate Finance Committee reported out a bill with significant Democratic priorities in it, but no Democrat voted for it.

Our Republican leader, Senator FRIST, gave us a week out of a very crowded legislative schedule because welfare reform—taking care of the needs of the poor, the needs of children—is high on the agenda of Senator FRIST. But it also has to be worked in with a very crowded legislative schedule. But he gave us time. He has many Members and many committee chairmen besides this Senator pressuring him for floor time to take up their bills, to consider legislation; yet, this had the high priority of our Republican leader.

We passed the bipartisan and Republican-sponsored Snowe amendment, increasing childcare by \$6 billion, and still it looks like Democrats are prepared to block action on this bill, this bill that helps poor people, because they have an agenda that somehow outranks welfare. Obviously, their agenda is to make political points. I am sad to say that ultimately children and their working moms are the ones who will pay the price for this political grandstanding.

I hope we can do better by them, Mr. President. I have worked hard so that we could in fact do better for these people. It would be a shame if we are prevented from passing a bill that would genuinely help those in need just so the other side can score political points, or at least what they perceive to be political points.

The question is whether the Democrats will be held accountable if they

succeed in killing welfare reform and killing an additional \$7 billion for childcare. This issue is not about a vote on minimum wage. Republicans are willing to take a vote on minimum wage. As my colleague from Missouri, Senator TALENT, said yesterday, "We are willing to pay the ransom. We just need some assurances that we get the victim back." We need to know we can pass this bill and get it to conference. That is the issue over which Democrats are obstructing.

It is very unprecedented that Democrats are objecting to appointing conferees. Let me say that more broadly. It is almost unprecedented for the legislative process not to work the way the Constitution writers intended, and that is you get to a point where you work out compromises between the other body and this one, and that takes a conference committee to do it. If you want a product instead of politics, you go to conference. That begs the point, are we ever, then, going to be able to pass anything around here? In order to get a bill enacted, it has to pass both bodies.

We have \$7 billion in childcare on the table right here. In order to score political points, Democrats are going to leave this banquet that is out there for people in need.

Again, the issue is not about getting a vote on minimum wage. Republicans are willing to take a vote on minimum wage. The issue is about getting a bill done, reaching finality. Democrats are preventing us from getting a welfare bill through the legislative process. I hope they have a surprise for this Senator and that we get cloture, and that they deliver to the people what they promised. This is very unfortunate for our country and for families who could have benefited from the bill that it looks like Democrats are going to kill today.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks recognition?

The Senator from Massachusetts is recognized.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Almost 18 minutes under Senator BAUCUS's time.

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank the Chair. I ask the Chair to remind me when I have a minute and a half left.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair will do so.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, we are voting at noontime today on a cloture motion, and those, obviously, in the Senate understand what this is all about. Before the Senate at the present time is a proposal offered by the Senator from California and myself to increase the minimum wage up to \$7 in just over a 2-year period. The minimum wage has not been increased for the last 7 years. Now we find the minimum wage purchasing power is at an all-time low.

Now, those on the other side—we just heard from my friend Senator GRASS-

LEY—are saying we are somehow stalling this legislation. We are not. When this amendment was offered, the Senator from California and myself agreed to a 20-minute time limitation so we could move ahead with the rest of the debate on the TANF reauthorization. That was objected to. And then the majority leader put down a cloture motion.

I welcome the opportunity to speak on the minimum wage because there is so much to say about it, about the people who are experiencing it and the impact of our failure to increase the minimum wage, particularly the impact on children. We have not had an opportunity to have a vote in the Senate for the last 7 years on this. It is time that we do. We are being precluded from doing so because of the parliamentary maneuvers of the majority to deny the Senate of the United States a vote up or down on whether we think some of the hardest working Americans ought to have an increase in the minimum wage.

The Republicans are so frightened about voting on this, so they do the parliamentary tricks in order to try to deny the Senate an opportunity to vote on the minimum wage. Well, it is beyond me why they don't want to take the hard vote. Why not go back to your constituents and say, I am for this or against it. If you are against it, explain why. But we are being denied. It is not just denying the sponsors; they are denying over 7 million hard-working Americans the opportunity to get an increase in their pay.

As I pointed out in the beginning, the purchasing power of the minimum wage now, at the end of this year, will be near an all-time low since it passed in 1938. We have a chance to do something about it and do something now.

A quick response to my colleagues on the other side regarding the whole question of how increasing the minimum wage isn't really related to getting people off welfare into jobs. Well, it is difficult for people who have listened to the debate to accept that, particularly when the Secretary of HHS himself said this in comment to the underlying program, TANF:

This administration recognizes that the only way to escape poverty is through work, and that is why we have made work and jobs that will pay at least the minimum wage

... Do you hear that? Secretary Thompson said this:

... the centerpiece of the reauthorization proposal for the TANF program.

Still our Republican friends say our amendment is not related to this. Of course it is. The President's spokesman indicated that. Still we are unable to get this.

Mr. President, I have stated who these people are who are earning the minimum wage. They are men and women of pride and dignity. They deal with tough jobs—cleaning out buildings of our country, all over our Nation. They work in schools as assistant

teachers. They work in nursing homes providing help and assistance for our senior citizens.

Let me read one short story which is typical about a minimum wage worker. The name of this person is Fannie:

She weighs bunches of purple grapes or rings up fat chicken legs at the supermarket where she works. Fannie Payne cannot keep from daydreaming.

"It's difficult to work at a grocery store all day, looking at all the food I can't buy," Mrs. Payne said. "So I imagine filling up my cart with one of those big orders and bringing home enough for all my kids."

Instead, she said that she and her husband, Michael, a factory worker, routinely go without dinner to make sure their four children have enough to eat. They visit a private hunger center monthly for three days' worth of free groceries, to help stretch the \$60 a week they spend on food.

"We're behind on all our bills," Mrs. Payne said. "We don't pay electricity until they threaten a cut-off. To be honest, I'm behind two months on the mortgage—that's \$600 a month."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 1½ minutes remaining.

Mr. KENNEDY. I yield myself 5 more minutes from Senator BAUCUS's time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KENNEDY. She continues:

"We owe \$800 on the water bill and \$500 for heat."

These are the real workers who are going to benefit from an increase in the minimum wage.

What has happened over the last 3 years? We have seen the number of Americans who are living in poverty grow from 31 million up to more than 34 million. These are 3 million Americans who are living in poverty, including hundreds of thousands of children, in the richest country in the world, who are living in poverty and, in so many instances, in hunger in the United States of America.

This is what the 2003 survey by the U.S. Conference of Mayors that looked at hunger found. These are mayors, Republicans and Democrats: 39 percent of the adults requesting food assistance were employed. Why? Because the minimum wage cannot provide sufficient income. These are hard-working individuals trying to look out after their families and feed them, and they cannot make enough to provide food for their families.

No. 2, a leading cause of hunger was low-paying jobs. We have a chance to do something about that by increasing the minimum wage. This is what the mayors from all over the country, Republican and Democrat, say, that a leading cause of hunger is low-paying jobs.

Emergency food assistance increased by 14 percent just this last year.

Fifty-nine percent of those requesting food assistance were members of families, with children and elderly parents. This is what is going on in this country. We can make a difference.

Finally, one of the major recommendations they make is raising the Federal minimum wage as a way

the Federal Government could help alleviate hunger. Do we hear that? That is the recommendation of the mayors of this country.

Look at what happened in a study the National Urban League did on the issue of minimum wage. They say:

Minimum wage workers are too often presented as teenagers or wives in the middle class. Yet the clear implication of this study is that the proposed increase in the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$6.65 an hour, or to \$7 an hour in the case today, would move 1.4 million American households to the level of being food secure, having enough money to buy nutritious, safe food for their families.

It continues:

The increase in the minimum wage lessens hunger in all households, but particularly in low-income households and in those households in which the householder was less educated, in African, Hispanic, or single parents.

This is what is happening. There is an increased number of those who are living in poverty and an increase in the number of children living in poverty.

Look at the impact of hunger, the consequences of hunger and food insecurity on children. This is the Heller study, June of 2002:

Elementary-school children from food-insufficient families were more likely to have repeated a grade in school in both a national sample of elementary-school children and a study of low-income families from the Pittsburgh area.

Hungry and at-risk for hunger children from 4 inner-city schools in Philadelphia and Baltimore were absent from school more days than other children and also had higher rates of tardiness. A similar finding with respect to missing school was found in a multi-state survey of low income households.

These are the studies. Children are going hungry in America. This proposal is not going to answer all the problems, but it will help 7 million Americans. That is something worthy of this body this day. But we are going to be denied by our Republicans the opportunity of even voting on this amendment.

As I have said often, this is a woman's issue because the great majority of individuals who receive the minimum wage are women. This is a children's issue because a great majority of those women have children. It is a women and children's issue. This is a family issue affecting women and children. This is a civil rights issue because so many of these men and women are of color. And finally, this is a fairness issue because people in the United States of America understand fairness, and they believe if you work 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, you should not have to live in poverty.

Let's vote up or down, at least have the courage of convictions on the other side and give us a chance and give these 7 million Americans who deserves an increase in the minimum wage an opportunity to have some hope at the end of the day because the Senate did the right thing.

I yield the floor.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, yesterday I asked unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a letter to

myself and Senator BAUCUS signed by 41 Democrat Senators. However, at the time of printing it was missing its second page. I again ask unanimous consent that the letter be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC.

Hon. CHUCK GRASSLEY, Chairman,
Hon. MAX BAUCUS, Ranking Member,
Senate Committee on Finance, Dirksen Senate
Office Building, U.S. Senate, Washington,
DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN AND SENATOR BAUCUS: We believe reauthorizing the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program is an important item on the congressional agenda for this year. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) made dramatic changes in our Nation's welfare laws that have had a profound impact on disadvantaged families. We agree with the President that the main goal of welfare programs should be to strengthen families and support self-sufficiency. We would like to work with you to build on the strengths of the new system, as well as address areas where the new law falls short.

We are encouraged by the number of families who have moved successfully from welfare to work. However, 33 million Americans still live in poverty. The current economic downturn has led to increases in both unemployment and, more recently in many States, the welfare caseload. Today, almost every State in the Nation faces a fiscal crisis. Under these circumstances, a concerted, bipartisan effort is necessary to preserve the progress we have seen so far, as well as encourage States to help more families become independent.

We strongly support several of the concepts the President has outlined, if designed and implemented appropriately. "Universal engagement" of welfare recipients would help make sure each family's specific circumstances are considered and addressed. Ending the current "caseload reduction credit," which gives States credit for people who are not working, and replacing it with an "employment credit," would provide stronger incentives for States to move families not only off of welfare but into jobs. Similarly, bipartisan proposals to strengthen child support would encourage better relations between non-custodial parents and their children, and help families stay off welfare. We would like to work with you to make sure all States can participate and that families receive the child support they are owed. We also agree that transitional Medicaid benefits should be extended so parents who leave welfare will know their children will have health care as their families make the transition to work.

We are concerned, however, that the administration's proposals lack several key reforms that will help more families achieve self-sufficiency. We believe reauthorization should include four important components to achieve this goal.

First, to be successful, a work-oriented welfare program must demonstrate that work will be fairly rewarded, and that families will be better off if they play by the rules. We must make sure states can provide critical work supports, especially quality child care. Child care assistance is essential if parents are to get a job and stay employed.

A significant increase in funding for child care is needed not only to support the current level of child care provided to low-in-

come working families, but also to improve the quality of care provided and cover the millions of eligible children currently without assistance. We know there are significant additional costs associated with increases in work requirements. Any welfare reform bill must include sufficient funding to ensure that we are not cutting child care services currently provided to low-income working families in order to pay for child care for families receiving TANF cash assistance. In addition, funding must be provided to improve the quality of child care to ensure that low-income children enter kindergarten ready to learn, as well as to increase access for the millions of families who are eligible but currently receive no child care assistance.

This investment is even more important because of the states' fiscal crises. At least 13 states cut their investments in child care in 2002 because of budget pressures, and more are likely to be forced to do so this year or even next year. In this climate, it is not realistic to rely on states to restore these needed funds, or fill in gaps left by federal policies. Failure to strengthen the federal investment in child care will have dire consequences for many low-income families that are trying to succeed in the workplace. We are pleased that the Senate Budget Resolution rejects the President's proposal to freeze child care funding, but we are still concerned that the proposed funding will not sustain current levels of support, let alone improve the quality of care or allow for increased work requirements.

Second, we must recognize the role legal immigrant families play in our economy. Most legal immigrants came to this country to find work; they contribute economically to their communities and play important roles in the labor force. Because of language and other barriers, many must take lower paying jobs and thus can be buffeted by economic dislocation. At their annual winter meeting, the nation's governors reiterated that immigration, which is controlled by the federal government, creates demands at the state level for education, job training, social and health services, and other assistance that is necessary to help immigrants integrate into our communities and become self-sufficient members of society. Currently, 31 states use their own funds, without federal support, to provide TANF benefits and services or health assistance to legal immigrants, and other states often absorb emergency health care costs for these families. Giving states the options to use federal funds for benefits and services to legal immigrants is an issue of fundamental fairness, and it would provide needed fiscal relief for states.

Third, states need more flexibility to make sure workers have the skills to succeed in the workplace. At a minimum, we support the provisions included in the bill reported by the Finance Committee last year. Full-time, work-related vocational training and education, post-secondary education, basic adult education, work-study, and other similar activities can lead to better jobs, more opportunities for advancement, increased family incomes, and a more competitive workforce. We should not arbitrarily limit states' ability to support these activities, since they provide a true "ticket to independence."

Fourth, we support state and local innovation, but will not support a "superwaiver" that merely shifts resources from one pot to another and eliminates basic protections for families, while bypassing Congressional oversight. A broad, vague superwaiver is no substitute for providing states with the flexibility within TANF to craft welfare-to-work programs that meet the particular needs of their state economies and the families they serve.

Finally, we would like to express concern over Administration and House proposals to significantly increase work participation standards and work hours, without flexibility and adequate increases in work supports. We agree that TANF recipients should be engaged in work activities that will help them to ultimately become self-sufficient. However, we feel strongly that we should not impose rigid requirements that would undermine successful state programs, or reduce states' flexibility, which allows them to consider and address the individual needs of participating families, including disabilities and other barriers to employment.

We would also like to point out that states have been successful in reducing their cash assistance caseloads because they have taken advantage of the flexibility in TANF to support low-income working families, including not only those receiving cash assistance, but also those who have left welfare or those who are at risk of needing welfare. These innovative efforts are already in danger because of the states' fiscal crises; increasing work participation requirements threatens the success of these programs by significantly reducing the help available to support low-income working families for child care, and other key services. We believe this would be a major step in the wrong direction.

We would also like to correct the perception that states can support higher work participation standards without additional resources. An argument has been made that states have more resources per TANF family than they had in 1996. This claim is misleading for several reasons. This line of reasoning assumes that non-TANF Child Care and Development Block grants (CCDBG), which support many low-income working families, are used only to support families receiving TANF cash assistance. In fact, the statute specifically states that CCDBG funds are to be used not only for families receiving assistance, but also for, "families who are attempting through work activities to transition off of such assistance program, and families who are at risk of becoming dependent on such assistance program." (PRWORA, Section 603).

The Administration's figures also assume that all TANF resources are used to support only families receiving assistance. But states have been successful in reducing their cash assistance caseloads because they have taken advantage of the flexibility in TANF to support low-income working families, including those who have left welfare or those who are at risk of needing welfare. The General Accounting Office reported in April 2002 that "at least 46 percent more families than are counted in the reported TANF caseload are receiving services funded, at least in part, with TANF/MOE funds."

The President has said, "It is not yet a post-poverty America." If we are to reach this goal, we must maintain strong federal and state support for welfare reform, so that families can escape the ravages of poverty and become self-sufficient. We look forward to working with you on a bipartisan basis to achieve these important goals.

Sincerely,

Tom Daschle, Bob Graham, Jay Rockefeller, Blanche L. Lincoln, John F. Kerry, John Breaux, Edward M. Kennedy, Jeff Bingaman, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Patty Murray, Jon S. Corzine, Barbara A. Mikulski, Maria Cantwell, Chuck Schumer.

Frank R. Lautenberg, Herb Kohl, Tom Harkin, Daniel K. Akaka, Russell D. Feingold, Byron L. Dorgan, Mary L. Landrieu, Paul Sarbanes, Dianne Feinstein, Joe Lieberman, Tim Johnson, Barbara Boxer, Dick Durbin, John Edwards.

Carl Levin, Daniel Inouye, Debbie Stabenow, Harry Reid, Jim Jeffords, Chris Dodd, Ron Wyden, Patrick Leahy, Mark Pryor, Fritz Hollings, Jack Reed, Kent Conrad, Joe Biden.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Seven minutes forty seconds.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, if you could tell me when I have used 3 minutes, I would appreciate it. I want to leave some time for the distinguished manager of the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, this issue is very important. If we really want to help people move from welfare to work, we ought to increase the minimum wage.

First, I wish to identify myself with the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts and what he just said about the importance of the minimum wage issue, but I want to talk more to the procedural question.

In 1995, when we debated welfare reform the first time, the Senate had 40 rollcall votes—40 rollcall votes. The next year when we dealt with it a second time, because the bill had been vetoed, the Senate had 30 rollcall votes, even under reconciliation. So we have had 70 rollcall votes in the consideration of this bill on two occasions in fewer than 10 years.

We have had one vote—one vote—on this bill so far. It was a good vote. I am very appreciative of the commitment made on a bipartisan basis to childcare. But the real question is, Can you have the kind of debate that has been experienced in the past, that should be anticipated now with the benefit of one vote?

I have offered the distinguished majority leader that we could work through the remaining amendments and finish this bill before we leave next week. I have offered that consistently through the last several days in the hope we could reach some agreement. I am very disappointed that we have not been able to find some way with which to resolve just the procedural differences. A vote on minimum wage, a vote on the unemployment compensation, a vote on relevant amendments to the welfare bill is not too much to ask and, indeed, that has been the practice of the Senate.

We are willing to work. This is not a question about whether we support welfare reform. We will get an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote on welfare reform, as we should. This is not a question of whether we should have anything less than an opportunity to debate issues that are directly relevant to people's lives as they try to cope with the extraordinary financial pressures they feel trying to get off welfare. We are hopeful we can do that.

We are hopeful we can work with our Republican colleagues and figure out ways to deal with these relevant amendments and these amendments

about which our Democratic caucus feel very strongly.

We will oppose cloture today but in no way, shape, or form is it an indication of our lack of willingness to work to finish the legislation itself. Give us a chance to do what we have done twice before on this bill. Give us a chance to vote on amendments that are critical to a good and full debate about the direction we ought to take with regard to this bill, and you will have closure on it at a time in the not too distant future.

I hope my colleagues will work with us to make that happen.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, what the Democratic leader has just suggested is allowing us to vote on welfare reform, but what the Democratic leader has insistently refused to do is to allow that bill to go to conference. Of course, a bill passage means nothing unless there can be a final resolution on that legislation. So what we are being told is they will give us an apparent victory of passing legislation with no end in sight. The idea that somehow or another we are going to have a final resolution—I think the words of the Senator from South Dakota were "final resolution"—is simply not accurate. Passing a bill that has already been passed by the House gets basically put in limbo until we go to conference.

The Democratic leader has been very clear about not moving this bill to conference. So let's be perfectly clear, we are absolutely ready—in fact, I will offer a unanimous consent. We are absolutely ready to give votes on issues of importance to the Democrats and, as I said before, we are willing to pay a ransom. But we want to make sure we get our victims back, and the victims in this case are the welfare reform bill and FSC/ETI.

We want to make sure they have a chance of becoming law, not put in the bin of bills that have yet to go to conference because of some concern about fairness in conferences.

I ask unanimous consent that at a time determined by the majority leader, after consultation with the Democratic leader, the Senate proceed to back-to-back votes, first, in relation to a public minimum wage amendment, to be followed by a vote on or in relation to the Boxer amendment with no second-degrees in order to either amendment; provided further that the bill be limited to germane amendments, and at 9:30 on Friday, April 2, the substitute amendment be agreed to, the bill be read a third time, and the Senate proceed to a vote on passage of the bill with no intervening action. Finally, I ask unanimous consent that following the passage of the bill, the Senate insist on its amendments, request a conference with the House, and the Chair be authorized to appoint conferees on the part of the Senate.

I will explain what I have requested, and that is that we give a vote up or

down, which has not been allowed on a whole host of judges on this side, on the issue the Democrats say is the important issue of the day, in exchange for all the germane amendments the Democrats would like to offer between now and tomorrow morning. And if they would like a little bit more time tomorrow, we would be happy to do that, but passage and conference, that is what this request asks.

Historically in the Senate, when we passed a bill we automatically went to conference. That has changed. So now we have to specifically include to do so in the unanimous consent or we do not get to conference.

I ask unanimous consent according to what I just read.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GRAHAM of South Carolina). Is there objection?

Mr. DASCHLE. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader.

Mr. DASCHLE. I simply say that on 21 occasions now when we have completed our work on a bill, we have done what is actually the normal process. We have—

Mr. SANTORUM addressed the Chair.

Mr. DASCHLE. I am reserving the right to object, and I assume I have the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania has the floor. There is no right to reserve the right to object.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I am happy to let the Senator from South Dakota talk on his time since my time is limited. If he would not mind taking his time, he could reserve the right to object.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I simply reserve the right to object and ask consent that the bill be sent to the House once it has been completed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I object to that modification because what the Senator from South Dakota has just said is, no, I will not let the bill go to conference. That is what sending the bill back to the House means, which means, no; no conference.

As we all understand, without conference we do not get closure. Without closure, we do not get a bill and we do not help millions of Americans get out of poverty. What we are playing is politics.

I commend to my colleagues a Brookings Institution Policy Brief of September 2003 "Welfare Reform & Beyond #28."

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have several articles printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Post, Apr. 14, 2003]

WELFARE REFORM WORKS, YET POLS SEEK ROLLBACK IN N.Y.C. AND U.S.

(By June O'Neill)

Politicians and experts from the left and the right acknowledge that welfare reform

has succeeded beyond the most optimistic expectations. Yet the reforms are nonetheless under political siege: Reauthorization of the major welfare-reform law is now nearly a year overdue and seems mired in Capitol Hill politics. And last week the City Council gutted the welfare-to-work policies that made New York City one of the brightest examples of reform's success.

One can only hope that Congress will listen to the message of a large body of research that the council totally disregarded—and pass a bill that retains the emphasis on work that has served us so well.

In 1995 and '96, many in the policy community predicted disaster—children crushed by poverty and neglect—if work-oriented reform were approved. Instead, as documented in the recent Manhattan Institute report I wrote with Anne Hill, the poverty rate for single mothers, the major group affected by welfare reform, has fallen by a record amount, from 40 percent to 32 percent between reform's passage in 1996 and 2001.

Underlying this drop in poverty was a dramatic rise in the employment of single mothers and an earnings gain large enough to more than offset the decline in welfare benefits: Single mothers saw their incomes rise by more than 20 percent over the same period.

As to the children, a recent study by Northwestern University's Lindsay Chase-Lansdale and others found that mothers' transitions off welfare and into employment were not associated with negative outcomes for their preschool or young adolescent children.

New York City was perhaps the ultimate testing ground for reform. In 1996, prior to passage of the reform law, 10 percent of the city's population was receiving welfare benefits, compared to only 3 percent in the rest of the state and 5 percent nationwide. Moreover, that number had fluctuated little in decades. But by December 2002, the city welfare rolls had dropped 55 percent, even including those getting state and city rather than federal aid. And the number of recipients continued to fall despite the painful 2001–2002 recession.

What happened to the people who left welfare? A 1997 Columbia University study predicted that 500,000 single mothers would be forced into poverty within five years. That prediction proved totally wrong: The poverty rate among the city's single mothers fell by more than a fifth, from 52 percent to 40 percent. Far from ending up helpless and in deprivation, single mothers moved into the workplace in record numbers.

Some have tried to explain away these positive developments by claiming that they were caused by the 1990s economic boom. That explanation fails under scrutiny. In our Manhattan Institute report, we find that welfare reform can account for more than 40 percent of the rise in single-mother employment between 1996 and 2001; the boom was responsible for less than 10 percent.

Of course, it is always difficult to separate out statistically the net effects of different variables when both are changing. However, our formal statistical analysis is bolstered by historical observations which clearly show that both the welfare and work participation of single mothers in the pre-reform period was only weakly responsive to the ups and downs of the business cycle. This explains why welfare rolls have not risen much during the recent recession and in many places have continued to decline.

In other words, single mothers didn't leave welfare for work because a good economy pulled them in. They left because welfare reform changed the incentives single mothers face, making work a much better option for them in the short and long-terms.

Before reform, welfare was a long-term entitlement to a guaranteed income—cash, food stamps and medical benefits, and often subsidized housing, too. This income was a limited one, but it was given without any work requirement. So a woman on welfare, particularly one with school-age children, also gained something everyone values—lots of time to spend on activities of her choosing.

Welfare reform changed all that. Strict work requirements sharply curtailed discretionary time. The five-year time limit meant that long-term welfare support was no longer an option. Faced with a dramatic shift in incentives, some women who would have gone on welfare did not do so, while many on welfare chose to leave welfare much sooner than they would have.

The commitment to join the workforce has given single mothers the impetus to gain the skills and experience essential to improving their lives. Indeed, my recent research shows that women did better economically the longer they stayed off welfare and in the workforce. Poverty rates dropped 50 percent for women who did these things for four years.

Why? Each year in the workforce brings additional money—their hourly pay rose about 2 percent (after inflation) per year worked, 3 percent if they stayed with one employer for that time—enabling many to raise themselves out of poverty.

Welfare reform succeeded because it made going to work more attractive than going on welfare. Reauthorization of reform is being held up and threatened by the failure of many in Congress to recognize this point.

Some would tie reauthorization to an increase in the ability of single mothers to substitute education and training programs for work experience. Such proposals sound good—and typically were the centerpiece of the failed welfare initiatives of the past—but they fly in the face of what we know about why welfare reform worked, in New York City and throughout the country.

(From the New York Times, Mar. 6, 2004)

THERE'S MORE WELFARE TO REFORM

(By Douglas J. Basharov)

When the landmark 1996 welfare reform law came up for reauthorization in 2002, easy approval was expected. After all, the legislation was popular, it had originally passed with significant bipartisan support and, well, it was working, with the number of people on welfare down an astonishing 60 percent since states started putting reforms in place.

But instead of sailing through Congress, the reauthorization effort became trapped in a political tug of war between Republicans (who wanted tougher work requirements added to the law) and Democrats (who wanted increased federal money for child care). Instead of reauthorizing the law, Congress has simply extended it several times, and now it looks as if there will be yet another extension. That's a shame—because the legislation needs to be updated now.

Despite the law's success in getting people to join the work force, roughly two million families remain on welfare, many headed by single mothers who are unable to get—or keep—a job because of limited education and skills.

The Bush administration's reauthorization proposal focused on these mothers. Because few states had made a concerted effort to move them into programs that build specific job skills, the administration called for states to adopt tougher work and training requirements. Under the proposal, states would have to put 70 percent of their adult recipients in these designated activities for 40 hours a week.

The administration's proposal was not quite as tough as it seemed. It had a number of participation exemptions. What's more, as the bill moved through the legislative process, it was watered down in order to win support from moderates on both sides of the aisle.

But the administration was reluctant to broadcast the legislation's softer side—doing so might undermine its pro-work rhetoric. That silence played into the hands of Democrats. If the Republicans wanted welfare mothers to work more, they argued, there should be a parallel increase in child care financing.

The Democrats had a point. But their demand for as much as \$10 billion in additional child care aid went far beyond the needs of welfare families. It would have covered families that had never been on welfare—and were in no danger of needing it. Over time, the Democrats lowered their demands; at this point, they would probably settle for about \$6 billion over five years, which is still more than what is needed to carry out the administration's plan.

For the past two years, the administration has rejected such large spending increases and, given the criticism President Bush is receiving for the growing federal deficit, it seems unlikely that he will give the Democrats what they want. The Democrats' position likewise seems to be hardening. They are now talking about waiting for a President John Kerry to reauthorize welfare reform.

The stalemate is doubly painful because there are clear grounds for compromise. Republican modifications have resulted in work requirements that, if clarified, would enjoy wide support. Democrats know that reauthorizing the legislation now will ensure that states get modest but still substantial increases in child care money. Another year's wait would keep the states at 2002 financing levels, something that has so far cost them \$400 million.

Further delay would also forestall desperately needed changes to the legislation. States have to be encouraged to address the needs of the hardest-to-employ welfare recipients by toughening participation requirements. Judging by the experience of the states that have had the most success moving these mothers into employment, we should require 50 percent of a state's welfare recipients to spend 24 hours a week in required activities—perhaps 32 hours a week for mothers with no children under the age of 6. States should be given greater flexibility in how they reach this level, so long as at least 10 percent of their welfare recipients are in mandatory community service or on-the-job training programs. (A separate exemption of up to 15 percent would be needed for the disabled.)

To cover additional child care and administrative costs, a formula should be established that ties payments to the states to increases in participation. The question of whether there should be more federal aid for child care should be reviewed on its own merits, not under the guise of welfare reform.

This kind of bipartisan compromise is never easy in an election season. But two million American families are still trapped on welfare. Can we really afford to wait another year?

(From the Washington Post, Aug. 5, 2003)

WORK: THE KEY TO WELFARE

(By Brian Riedl and Robert Rector)

Should Congress make work requirements for welfare recipients stricter? That's what would happen under a bill the House of Representatives has passed. It would require

more recipients to work 40 hours a week instead of the current 30 and stop vocational training from counting as "work."

Bad idea, the critics say. They claim that education and training programs lead to successful high-paying careers, while putting welfare recipients to work immediately traps them in low-paying, dead-end jobs.

Wrong.

Welfare recipients assigned to immediate work see their earnings increase more than twice as fast over the following five years as those first placed in education-based programs, according to calculations we made using data from the Manpower Demonstration Research Corp., a New York-based non-profit group. In fact, most government-run job training programs barely raise hourly wage rates at all, a report commissioned by the U.S. Labor Department reveals.

If the goal of welfare reform is to raise earnings while reducing dependency, then quickly moving welfare recipients into real jobs is the answer. Prolonged classroom training tends to be the dead end.

Before the 1996 welfare reforms, the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) safety net was just that—a net not only catching but also trapping nearly all who fell into it. Welfare reform replaced AFDC with a program called Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). This program was designed not as a net but as a trampoline, springing families back up to self-sufficiency by placing adults in permanent jobs.

The undeniable success of this approach is demonstrated by the more than 5 million people (including 3 million children) who have risen out of poverty since the law was enacted. After remaining static for nearly a quarter-century, the poverty rate of black children has dropped by a third and is now at the lowest point in U.S. history. The poverty rate for single mothers has plummeted in a similar manner since 1996; it, too, is at the lowest point in national history.

But welfare reform wasn't perfect. Today less than half of TANF adult recipients are employed or preparing for employment in any way. Most remain idle and continue to collect welfare checks.

President Bush and his congressional allies want to strengthen welfare reform by increasing the TANF work-participation rate to 70 percent; opponents seem content excluding millions of families from working or even preparing to work. Yet those who would enact legislation that leaves hundreds of thousands of welfare recipients in idle dependence are clearly harming those they wish to help.

And those who believe welfare recipients are better served by education and training programs are ignoring the skills that would help these poor adults the most. A study conducted by the Washington-based Urban Institute shows that employers consider a positive attitude, reliability, work ethic and punctuality the most important traits they look for when hiring for entry-level positions. These traits can't be taught in a classroom, or as part of a training program—they are acquired through firsthand work experience. Not surprisingly, the same employers consider job training the least important qualification.

Unlike those stuck in a classroom or government-run job-training office, individuals placed in immediate work gain real-world experience mastering job duties. As they build work records, more job options and higher earnings become available. In the meantime, even minimum-wage parents can use the earned income tax credit, food stamps, Medicaid, the Child Care Development Fund and the school lunch program to raise their total income to two-thirds above the federal poverty line.

Some critics insist that all employable adults have already left welfare, leaving only individuals with insurmountable personal barriers to work. Not true. Urban Institute data reveal the current welfare recipients are no less work-ready than those who have left welfare. In fact, a substantial number of them aren't classified as having any barriers to work. And most of those with such barriers as a lack of transportation, a slight disability or an inability to speak English can, in fact, land jobs. But their chances of doing so are much better if we insist on immediate work.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the unanimous request of the Senator from Pennsylvania?

Mr. DASCHLE. I object.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Montana.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise to oppose the pending motion to invoke cloture. We are here today because the majority chooses not to allow a vote on a minimum wage. It is that simple.

That is wrong. It is wrong because the millions of hard-working Americans making the minimum wage deserve a raise. It is wrong because the Senators from California and Massachusetts also deserve to get a vote on their amendment. It is not right that a person who has a full-time job at minimum wage still has to live in poverty, but that is where we are today in America.

For a family of three, let's say a mom and two kids, the gap between the poverty line and the minimum wage is \$3,681. That is right, a family would need \$3,681 more just to get up to the poverty level, and that is before taking into account the cost of child care, which is a big factor, or the cost of gasoline for the car—we know how much gasoline prices are rising—or the cost of clothes for a job. Often a person has to buy separate clothes for a job.

If we want people to be able to move off welfare and into work—and that is what we want, people off welfare into work—we have to make sure the work they get pays enough so they can get off welfare and lift them out of poverty. That is what we have to do, and that is why increasing the minimum wage is so important.

Most people who are on welfare will say they want to get off welfare; they do not like it; they hate it. That is what they tell me. I have talked to a lot of people on welfare. One of the main reasons they will say it is so difficult to get off welfare is because the job that pays at minimum wage does not pay enough for them to get by. I have heard that countless times. They are working full time but they cannot make ends meet. We need to raise the minimum wage to help people get off welfare.

The vote today is also about another point. The Senators from California and Massachusetts deserve at least to have a vote on their amendment. They are willing to enter into a short time agreement. They are not delaying. They say, sure, let's have a vote on

their amendment, with a short time agreement. They are not delaying. It is the other side which is preventing them from having a vote.

We on this side of the aisle do not wish to delay this bill. We are willing to work to get a finite list of amendments. We are willing to enter into a time agreement on amendments. We are not asking for anything out of the ordinary.

I remind my colleagues that during the 13-day period for which the Senate considered the basic bill, the 1995 welfare bill, September 7 to September 19 of 1995, the Senate conducted 43 rollcall votes on amendments. So far this year we have conducted one, and yet there is a cloture motion to try to stop debate. That is not the way to legislate. We are not asking for anything out of the ordinary. We merely ask that Senators be able to offer amendments and get votes on their amendments.

We have time agreements, we have lists, and so forth. That is what this debate is about. I urge my colleagues to uphold the rights of Senators. I urge Senators to vote to increase the minimum wage. I urge Senators to oppose cloture.

How much time does each side have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Ten seconds.

Mr. BAUCUS. I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I reiterate that we are perfectly willing to give up-or-down votes for a chance to pass this bill. I have asked unanimous consent and the other side has said no.

I have heard so much about everyone having a right to get up-or-down votes. We have had a debate on the floor of the Senate for a year and a half about up-or-down votes on Federal judges. So maybe we can exchange up-or-down votes.

I ask unanimous consent that we have an up-or-down vote on the Boxer-Kennedy amendment, followed by a vote on a McConnell relevant amendment dealing with minimum wage, in exchange for a vote on Calendar No. 169, Carolyn Kuhl, of California, to be a judge on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, and Calendar No. 455, Janice Rogers Brown to be United States Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BAUCUS. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. SANTORUM. So we understand up-or-down votes only apply to their amendments and the things they want to do, not what Republicans want to do.

We need closure and we are not getting it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time has expired.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, the clerk will call the roll.

The assistant journal clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SENATOR BYRD'S 17,000TH VOTE

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I would inform my colleagues that with this vote we will witness history. Senator BYRD will have cast his 17,000th vote. No Senator in all of history will have done that. I will have more to say about that after the vote.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, pursuant to rule XXII, the clerk will report the motion to invoke cloture.

The assistant journal clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the substitute amendment to Calendar No. 305, H.R. 4, an act to reauthorize and improve the program of block grants to States for temporary assistance for needy families, improve access to quality child care, and for other purposes.

Bill Frist, Charles E. Grassley, John E. Sununu, Conrad Burns, Lamar Alexander, Peter G. Fitzgerald, Larry E. Craig, John Cornyn, Robert F. Bennett, John Ensign, Orrin G. Hatch, Mike Enzi, Mitch McConnell, Ted Stevens, Norm Coleman, James M. Inhofe, Kay Bailey Hutchison.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the pending committee substitute amendment to H.R. 4, an act to reauthorize and improve the program of block grants to States for temporary assistance for needy families, improve access to quality childcare, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I announce that the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) is necessarily absent.

Mr. REID. I announce that the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) is necessarily absent.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) would vote "nay."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 51, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 65 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Alexander	DeWine	McCain
Allard	Dole	McConnell
Allen	Domenici	Miller
Bennett	Ensign	Nickles
Bond	Enzi	Roberts
Brownback	Fitzgerald	Santorum
Bunning	Frist	Sessions
Burns	Graham (SC)	Shelby
Campbell	Grassley	Smith
Chafee	Gregg	Snowe
Chambliss	Hagel	Specter
Cochran	Hatch	Stevens
Coleman	Hutchison	Sununu
Collins	Inhofe	Talent
Cornyn	Kyl	Thomas
Craig	Lott	Voivovich
Crapo	Lugar	Warner

NAYS—47

Akaka	Dorgan	Levin
Baucus	Durbin	Lieberman
Bayh	Edwards	Lincoln
Biden	Feingold	Mikulski
Bingaman	Feinstein	Murray
Boxer	Graham (FL)	Nelson (FL)
Breaux	Harkin	Nelson (NE)
Byrd	Hollings	Pryor
Cantwell	Inouye	Reed
Carper	Jeffords	Reid
Clinton	Johnson	Rockefeller
Conrad	Kennedy	Sarbanes
Corzine	Kohl	Schumer
Daschle	Landrieu	Stabenow
Dayton	Lautenberg	Wyden
Dodd	Leahy	

NOT VOTING—2

Kerry
Murkowski

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 47. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

Mr. FRIST. I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. DASCHLE. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

CONGRATULATING SENATOR ROBERT C. BYRD ON CASTING HIS 17,000TH VOTE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to remark on a truly historic moment that just took place about 15 seconds ago, a moment we all witnessed which is special in United States history in a way we will shortly lay out.

Senator ROBERT BYRD is already recognized as an American icon. In 1917, he began life as a virtual orphan. His mom passed away when he was a year old. His aunt and uncle brought him to West Virginia to raise him on their own.

Hard working, enterprising, ROBERT BYRD made the most of every single opportunity along the way and rose to become the third longest serving Member of Congress in U.S. history.

Among his many distinctions, Senator BYRD has held more leadership positions in this body, the U.S. Senate, than any other Senator in American history.

Over the course of eight consecutive terms, Senator BYRD has cast more votes than any other Senator in the