

Finally, I thank all of my colleagues who joined me tonight in this Special Order hour. Preventing nuclear war has never been a partisan goal, and history shows that bipartisan cooperation is not just possible, but it is necessary. The choices that we make in the coming months will shape global security for decades to come, so I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to recommit to arms control, to verification, and to the hard work of reducing nuclear risk.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

RESHAPING THE AMERICAN FAMILY

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. GROTHMAN of Wisconsin was recognized for 30 minutes.)

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, yesterday in this building, we had a panel put together to address the situation of the lack of two-parent homes in America and the degree to which it is caused by huge marriage penalties in our welfare system.

The panel consisted of Matt Dickerson of the Economic Policy Innovation Center, Terry Schilling of the American Principles Project, Jamie Gillespie from the White House, Robert Rector from The Heritage Foundation, together with three Congressmen.

The purpose of the program was to provide a framework to deal with the antimarriage bias in American welfare programs. The panel was put together at the request of 16 organizations and other concerned citizens who work with nonprofits.

In addition to The Heritage Foundation and the American Principles Project, Center for Urban Renewal and Education, Advancing American Freedom, AdvanceUSA, Concerned Women for American Legislative Action Committee, the Coalition for Jewish Values, the Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, Eagle Forum, Family Watch International, Faith and Family Foundation, Independent Women's Forum, Students for Life Action, the Family Policy Alliance, and the Faith and Liberty in the Nation's Capital organization all were present.

I, quite frankly, since I have been here, haven't seen such a groundswell of so many conservative nonprofit groups to come together to address such a problem. Yet, this isn't surprising. The number of children born into families without a mother or father at home, missing one, is very high. When I was a child, that number was around 4 percent to 5 percent. It is now around 42 percent.

These groups have gotten together to call on President Trump, Speaker JOHNSON, and Majority Leader THUNE to do something about this. It is not

unusual that a single woman, if she marries the father of her child, would lose over \$25,000 in benefits.

By the way, when I talk about going from 4 percent without a mother and father at home to over 40 percent, at the time it was 4 percent, we didn't even have abortions. Think about that. Then, in the interim, we had abortions, and still the number of children born into homes without a father at home went up by a factor of more than 10.

There are over 70 government programs available to a single parent with low income, but you lose the benefits of these programs if you marry the other parent who has a decent income of, let's say, \$50,000 a year.

I realize that there are great American families of all backgrounds. I, like all of us, know single parents who have done a fantastic job of raising their children. I commend them for that, but I think, also, everyone would agree that it is easier on both the parents and the children if you have two parents there. In essence, bribing a young couple not to get married is not the way to go about doing things.

Programs like food stamps; low-income housing; earned income tax credit; Women, Infants, and Children; Medicaid; Pell grants; and government daycare all are generous programs. You would lose those benefits if you had another parent in the house with an income.

Of course, this changes behavior, as well. I remember talking about this topic about 15 years ago at a Tea Party event in Wisconsin. I talked about Pell grants, which is a program of free college tuition or free scholarships for low-income kids. I was addressing, like I said, a Tea Party group, and like most Tea Party groups, it is usually older men who agreed with me.

Yet, there was a young gal who was tending bar where we had the meeting, and I asked her what she thought about the speech and what she thought about Pell grants, which were, like I said, a grant conditioned upon having low income.

She said that her and her husband got married before they had children, but she told me none of her friends were getting married. They got free college.

I have heard that from other people. That is just one of these programs, Pell grants, which, intentionally or unintentionally, is designed to discourage marriage. Like I said, I rattled off about eight programs. There are about 70 programs that you could lose if you worked your way out of poverty or married somebody who wasn't in poverty.

Usually, what you have to do is you have to keep your income below \$16,000 or \$17,000, and if you talk to employers who hire people who are making in the \$10 to \$15-an-hour range, they will always give you anecdotes of their employees who don't want to work extra hours, or they will lose their benefits.

□ 1900

They don't want a raise because they will lose their benefits. This is because in America right now we discourage work, and we actually discourage savings as well, and we discourage marriage as well.

Just yesterday, I heard of another couple. They just had their second child, but they weren't getting married. I didn't dig into it, but I know what is going on when you have people like that not getting married. They realize they don't want to lose their benefits.

Now, the fact that all of these government programs are set up to discourage marriage, is this an accident? Believe it or not, no, I don't think it is entirely an accident, because there are very powerful intellectuals on the left who wanted to get rid of families.

We know Karl Marx himself felt that in order to have a dream universe, you had to get rid of the family.

A woman by the name of Kate Millett, who was around in the 1960s and I think could be described as the mother of women's studies classes, also was adamant that we should try to get men out of the household. I don't think it is a coincidence that she was at the peak of her power in the 1960s when a lot of these programs went into effect.

Now, this problem should have been addressed years ago. It is kind of a well-worn anecdote, but I will say it again. Patrick Monahan, a Democrat U.S. Senator, in the late 1960s put together a study, and he warned the degree to which we had these programs contributing to the breakdown in marriage, but nobody paid attention Patrick Monahan.

Another man who did a lot of work in this area was George Gilder who wrote a couple of books, "Men in Marriage," "Visible Man," "Wealth in Poverty." He first looked into this problem, as some people do, in a ghetto in Albany, New York. He could remember the time right before that when it was a considered real crisis if a woman got pregnant out of wedlock. However, to his surprise, even in the 1970s, it was a cause for enjoyment or a cause to celebrate for the young couple because when the girlfriend got pregnant, she was able to make the rounds and get a free apartment, get free food, get free medical care and, at the time, get free cash from a program called Aid to Families With Dependent Children. Now we have cash from a program called TANF.

In any event, Gilder was a little bit surprised, but wrote books on the matter saying: Hey, wait a minute here. It shouldn't be a cause for celebration when someone gets pregnant out of wedlock. It should be a cause for a little bit of panic and what are we going to do now; but it wasn't in the late 1970s as George Gilder documented.

Here we are today. We did do a little bit of looking at the welfare programs in the 1990s under Bill Clinton, but we didn't go anywhere near far enough.

By the way, George Gilder made another observation. When we talk about the welfare state, it obviously affects the children, it obviously affects the single women, and it affects the men. But according to Gilder, of the three groups, the one who is harmed the most by our welfare system is the men. Of course, the women are hurt a little in that financially it can be a little bit of a struggle. The statistics will show again and again it harms the children, but we have created a society in which men have lost the purpose of raising children and being involved in the raising of their children, being involved in providing for their children. Therefore, in areas in which the welfare culture is widespread, we have a situation that the men are doing drugs, committing crimes because they have no purpose in life.

Here in Washington and other big cities, like Chicago and Milwaukee, they write articles about where is all this crime coming from. And if they would stop and look or talk to any policemen, they will tell you where the crime is coming from. The crime is coming from children from these broken families. If we didn't have these broken families, a lot of the men who are committing the crimes, the men that are just hanging out and doing drugs would have a purpose in life and be more likely to be productive.

I should point out, by the way, that this is a very important thing for the men; but sometimes people say that we need the welfare system because there are no men with decent jobs, and that is why we have to have the government step in.

I have an Indian immigrant friend of mine. It always amazes me how people who come here from other countries have observations that are not made by the native-born who are just used to it. As my Indian immigrant friend said: In America, the woman marries the government. In any event, while the woman is marrying the government, the man has nothing to do, and that is why we have many of these problems.

I, of course, have been in politics for a while now. I have attended a lot of committee hearings, and be it committee hearings on poverty, be it committee hearings on crime, be it committee hearings on drugs, be it committee hearings on depressants, be it committee hearings on people not doing well at school, they always look for how does this happen; but they never address the obvious reason why kids do less well in school or why kids end up committing crimes. They do it because of the total breakdown in the family.

In any event, both for the children and the men and the single women, we would be better off retracing our steps back to the great society years of 1965 and 1966 when, in my opinion, the worst President in our country's history decided to institute these programs and destroy the family. I am not sure that was the motive. I think perhaps the real motive was electoral.

Our forefathers, when they put together our founding documents, warned us that there were going to be some politicians who were going to try to make people dependent on the government in exchange for votes. I think that at the time was maybe the motivation for these horrible programs; but in any event, it is something that we have to address now.

Now, we are going to be doing a reconciliation bill, I hope, sometime in the next 6 months. Almost all of these programs are what are referred to as "mandatory spending," so we can change these programs and do what we can to get rid of the perverse incentives.

I think some of the burden of these folks will have to be put on private organizations because it is a problem no doubt if people are able to get these programs without being confronted with moral choices or moral problems.

In a great book that I am reading, "The Tragedy of American Compassion," the type of people who were involved in providing food for the poor when our country was founded were very keenly aware that programs which indiscriminately gave things to people were actually harmful to people, that you had to weigh in with them on their moral choices, on their work choices. It was, in fact, a negative to set up a program in which one did not look at moral choices that people are making.

In any event, after we have spent about 60 years after the Great Society, 60 years after Patrick Monahan warned us what would happen, it is time for this Congress to address this problem, get rid of the perverse incentives which discourage marriage and get America back to where we were before the Great Society when we had much stronger families, when crime was lower than it is today—I think you would have to say people came out of school better than today, and I think you would have to say the amount of antidepressants consumed was a tiny fraction of what we have today—and really Make America Great Again.

□ 1910

I implore President Trump's administration—we had a representative from his administration here yesterday. I implore them to put together a working group so that we can come up with solutions to this problem over the next few months.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT SUBMITTED BY MR. COLE, CHAIR OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS, REGARDING H.R. 7006, FINANCIAL SERVICES AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT AND NATIONAL SECURITY, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2026

The following is an explanation of the Financial Services and General Government

and National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2026.

This Act includes 2 regular appropriations bills for fiscal year 2026. The divisions contained in the Act are as follows:

- Division A—Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act, 2026
- Division B—National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2026
- Division C—Other Matters

Section 1 of the Act is the short title of the bill.

Section 2 of the Act displays a table of contents.

Section 3 of the Act states that, unless expressly provided otherwise, any reference to "this Act" contained in any division shall be treated as referring only to the provisions of that division.

Section 4 of the Act states that this explanatory statement shall have the same effect with respect to the allocation of funds and implementation of this legislation as if it were a joint explanatory statement of a committee of conference.

Section 5 of the Act provides a statement of appropriations.

Section 6 of the Act provides the customary payments to the widows or heirs of recently deceased Members of Congress.

DIVISION A—FINANCIAL SERVICES AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2026

The joint explanatory statement accompanying this division is approved and indicates Congressional intent. Unless otherwise noted, the language set forth in House Report 119-236 carries the same weight as language included in this joint explanatory statement and should be complied with unless specifically addressed to the contrary in this joint explanatory statement. While some language is repeated for emphasis, it is not intended to negate the language referred to above unless expressly provided herein.

References in the joint explanatory statement to "the Committees" or "the Committee" refer to the Committees on Appropriations of the House and Senate.

Quarterly Obligation Reports.—Section 633 of this Act directs that no later than 45 days after the last day of each quarter, each agency funded in this Act shall submit a report to the Committees that includes total obligations of the agency for that quarter for each appropriation.

Reports.—Each agency funded in this Act shall submit with the baseline report required by Section 608 a list of the reporting and briefing requirements contained in this Act and in the House and Senate reports, including due dates and the office responsible for preparing the report or providing the briefing. The summary should include Inspector General and Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports.

Agencies may request to brief the Committees in lieu of a requested report subject to the approval of the Committees. If both the House and Senate requested a report or briefing on a similar subject, the report or briefing may be consolidated into one report or briefing subject to the approval of the Committees.

Agencies funded by this Act should review the reprogramming guidelines included in Section 608 of this agreement and are reminded that baseline reports are due to the Committees no later than 60 days after the enactment of this Act and that Section 608 requires accurate and complete organizational charts that reflect the hierarchical and reporting structure of their bureaus, divisions, services, and offices.

Agencies funded by this Act are directed to provide the Committees with direct, unobstructed, and timely access to the budget offices and to provide the Committees with