This is one of those issues in which there are some differences in priorities. It certainly is not that we want to see children starving. We could take all of the money in defense and in intelligence and spend it on other programs, and to many that would not be enough. And, certainly, we cannot do that.

Mr. Speaker, we are concerned about a balanced budget. This Congress passed, and it may have been over the objection of many who have spoken, a budget earlier in the year and we conform to that budget. We fit within it. We will take those reductions as they come.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to the gentleman from Massachusetts that we are substantially below where we were when this House passed this bill some months ago.

Mr. Speaker, I want to comment on what the gentlewoman from California [Ms. PELOSI] said. There is no Member of the House that has more of a concern, a very dedicated concern in the areas that she has those concerns in our foreign relations policies. I have stated on this floor as well that we should not, and we cannot, justify expending money in the intelligence budget on economic intelligence. I would have a very difficult time coming and suggesting that that is what we ought to be doing.

Mr. Speaker, if there is information in the bigger national security issue that we would gain and glean from that, I think that is as well, as the gentleman from New Mexico [Mr. RCHARDSON] so ably pointed out, an area in which we can be very helpful to our own commerce. But it is not company-specific; it is not giving one company advantage over the other.

Mr. Speaker, it is not that just the agencies within the intelligence community are going out and searching for new roles in order to justify their existence. They are being asked to do these things.

The Vice President is very concerned about the role that intelligence can play, and past intelligence information that has come together, on the environment. And if there is information that we can get on the environment, and information we can get about economic intelligence and other areas, I think that is a very legitimate cause. I think it would be very difficult to justify expenditures solely for those purposes. They are not the major priority and role of the intelligence community. They are an offshoot. The country is better served by it. And as long as it does not infringe upon or become more significant or important than that dealing with national security and the intelligence community, I will continue as well to support it.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Washington only had 1½ minutes remaining. Does the gentleman need additional time?

Mr. DICKS. Mr. Speaker, no. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the conference report.

The previous question was ordered.

The conference report was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COMBEST. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the conference report just agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 4, PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT OF 1995

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 319, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 319

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 4) to restore the American family, reduce illegitimacy, control welfare spending and reduce welfare dependence. All points of order against the conference report and against its consideration are waived. The conference report shall be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TORKILDSEN). The gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON] is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, for the purposes of debate only, I yield 30 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HALL], pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, during consideration of this resolution, of course, all time yielded is for the purposes of debate only.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 319 waives points of order against the conference report accompanying H.R. 4, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1995; that is, the Welfare Reform Act, and against its consideration. The resolution provides, further, that the conference report shall be considered as read.

Mr. Speaker, this is a traditional rule for conference reports and I know of no controversy about the rule. It was voted out of the Committee on Rules last night around midnight by a voice vote.

Mr. Speaker, today this rule will allow the House to vote on legislation which literally overhauls the Nation's dilapidated and failed welfare system. When I opened the debate on this measure back on March 21 of 1995, many months ago, I suggested then that the American people should measure welfare reform proposals based on how they would affect the status quo. That is what this debate is all about here today: the status quo. Do we want the status quo? Has it worked, or do we want to change it?

Mr. Speaker, most everyone in this country agrees the current system has failed. It has failed our families. It has failed our children. And they also agree it has not been for a lack of spending.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 35 years, taxpayers have spent $5.4 trillion in Federal and State spending on welfare programs. This welfare reform bill honestly and compassionately addresses the key problems of poverty in America, and that is illegitimate births, welfare dependency, child support enforcement, and putting low-income people back to work. That is one of the basics of this legislation, putting welfare people back to work; giving them the work ethic that literally is what built this great country of ours over all the years.

Mr. Speaker, not only does this legislation encourage responsibility and work among single mothers that are the vast majority of welfare recipients, and that is the saddest thing in the world, but this bill contains tough measures to crack down on these deadbeat fathers who have deserted their families.

The conference agreement before us today establishes uniform State tracking procedures for those who owe child support and refuse to pay it. It promotes automated child support procedures in every State of this Union; contains strong measures to ensure rigorous child support collection services; and, according to the testimony in the Committee on Rules last night by the very able gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARCHER] and the gentleman from Florida [Mr. SHAW], the child support title of their conference agreement enjoys broad bipartisan support in this Congress and, incidentally, in the Clinton administration as well, which is why this President ought to sign this bill.

Mr. Speaker, on this particular title of the bill, I would like to relate a conversation I had recently with a constituent of mine to emphasize its importance. A member of my district office staff informed me that she had received a call from a woman who explained, in between sobs, she was literally crying, that she desperately needed to speak with me.

Mr. Speaker, I have been tied up down here for several weeks and have not been able to get home. But when I went back to my office late that night, I reached my constituent by telephone and she explained to me that she was holding down two jobs to support an 8-year-old son who had a learning disability. She told me public schools do not provide her son with adequate attention to that particular disability and he needed the care of a special tutor, but, she said, that her two small salaries that she has worked at, and she has never taken 1 day or taken 1

penny of welfare payments, she said that her two small salaries do not allow her to pay the additional expense for her young son, who is now beginning to fall behind all of his peer in the third grade.

Mr. Speaker, the problem, of course, is that the boy's father provides no child support whatsoever and her efforts to track him down and force him to pay his share were to no avail.

Mr. Speaker, the sad part about all of this is the father is a college graduate. He lives in a nearby State. He holds down an excellent job, and he refuses to pay child support at all. Not a nickel. This is an absolutely heart-wrenching story, Mr. Speaker, and it is typical of the lack of responsibility that many men have demonstrated in our society today.

In an age in which some in our society find it fashionable to blame anyone but themselves, this bill, and my colleagues ought all to pay particular attention to it, this bill truly emphasizes responsibility among fathers. It is going to hold them responsible.

The child support title in this bill will help ensure that all persons are held responsible for the consequences of their actions. As we close a year-long debate on this subject today, let us ask the President of the United States a question that this House and this Senate has already courageously answered in this legislation: Which is the truly compassionate public choice for the children trapped in poverty today? To sign this landmark reform legislation, or to do nothing at all and leave the status quo, a failed status quo?

Mr. Speaker, I urge the President to uphold the promise he made to the American people in the 1992 election campaign, which is written in his book, in which he pledged to reform welfare as he knows it today.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious matter. It is the most important piece of legislation that will come before this body this year. It truly will help the people in this country who have been saddled by welfare all these years to recuperate, to return to the work ethic, and to be good citizens in this community. That is why I urge support of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1200

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. HALL of Ohio asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, as Chairman SOLOMON explained, this resolution, 319, makes it in order to consider the conference report on H.R. 4, the Personal Responsibility Act. It waives all points of order against the conference report.

Mr. Speaker, I object to the way the Republican majority has handled this bill. Members of the Committee on Rules were given about an hour's notice after the text of the bill was received by the committee, and that is 60 minutes to look at this enormously complex and important piece of legislation.

The bill will have an enormous effect on millions of needy Americans. It will cut into the safety net that provides basic food and nutrition services, assistance to children, and school lunches. It makes sweeping changes that roll back 6 decades, years of welfare laws, and for some it will be truly a matter of life and death. Sixty minutes, sixty minutes is all we had to read this stack of paper and get prepared to vote on such a critical bill.

Mr. Speaker, it is the height of irony that we are about to debate something called the Personal Responsibility Act when the majority party has handled this bill so irresponsibility. The process has also violated the rights of the minority. The Democrats on the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities were not given copies of this report until last night.

We will recognize the need to move quickly on welfare reform. But this breakneck speed increases the risk of mistakes and simply is wrong, and I think we are going to be sorry for it.

The conference agreement makes deep reductions in basic programs for low-income children, families, elderly, and disabled people. Is that really what the American people want?

Earlier this week, a Nielson poll showed that 95 percent of Americans consider hunger and poverty issues as important as balancing the Federal budget and reforming health care.

I would like to read that again. That is a very interesting poll.

Earlier this week, a Nielson poll showed that 95 percent of Americans consider hunger a poverty issues as important as balancing the Federal budget and reforming health care.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates 14 million children and 2 million elderly people will be affected by reductions in the food stamp program, and it is wishful thinking to believe that private charity can absorb the deep cuts that are made by this bill.

A recent study by the U.S. Conference of Mayors showed that 18 percent of Americans requesting emergency food assistance this year were not fed, due to lack of resources, and almost two-thirds of these requests came for parents and children. Emergency shelters and feeding centers have to turn away hungry and homeless people because the demand is already greater than the resources.

Let us talk about the contract with America. No; I am not talking about the Republican contract that was trotted out for the last election. I am talking about the 60-year-old bipartisan contract that guarantees that every low-income child in America will eat a good breakfast or lunch as part of his or her schoolday.

The cuts in this bill will affect human lives. The cost we are scoring are real human costs. These people do not have a line on any CBO ledger or an item in the OMB budget.

It is 4 days until Christmas, and this bill is the gift that Congress is giving to the poor and the needy of this Nation. They need more than the bah humbug that this bill says to them.

Mr. Speaker, I oppose this rule, and I oppose this mean-spirited, shortsighted bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Claremont, CA [Mr. DREIER], who serves with me on the Committee on Rules, my vice chairman, and is someone who has worked diligently for many, many years on welfare reform.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

I would like to at this very festive time of year extend congratulations to him for his fine leadership on our committee.

I rise in strong support of this rule and the conference report. We all know that back in 1992, when Bill Clinton was a candidate for President of the United States, he used a term which has been widely stated here in the Congress and throughout the country and the media. His statement was that we would end welfare as we know it. Those were the President's words, and he made that very strong commitment that he would pursue it.

Unfortunately, if you look back at the work of the 103d Congress, we failed to do it. We are here today trying to help the President keep the commitment that he made when he was a candidate.

I have said it on a lot of legislation. This is another very clear example of an item that needs to be addressed.

Let us talk about the important benefits of this conference report. One of the most onerous burdens that has been placed on the States has been the mandates, the mandates which have said to State governments that they are required to provide a wide range of things.

Now, take my State of California, for example; under the provisions of the present law, we see the Federal Government tell the States that they have to expand State dollars, their own State dollars, to continue to provide welfare to those who are flagrantly abusing drugs and alcohol.

We feel very strongly that the States should have the flexibility to make a determination as to how they are going to expend those dollars. Roughly $475 million in my State of California has gone to those abusers of alcohol and drugs, not to say that we are not compassionate, not concerned about them, but to continue that flow of cash to those people who are engaging in that

kind of abuse is obviously a terrible misuse of those taxpayer dollars.

Where should those dollars go? They obviously should go to the women and the children, the impoverished who are struggling, not to those who are out there abusing drugs.

This legislation allows the States the opportunity to make a determination as to how they will best use those dollars. That flexibility is key. It is very important.

We all know that the 535 of us who serve in the United States Congress do not have a corner on compassion. We have seen the creativity for welfare reform emanate from States, like mine of California under Governor Wilson, Massachusetts, where Governor William Weld has done a phenomenal job, as the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MOAKLEY] has pointed out.

On the issue of welfare reform, look at Governor Tommy Thompson of Wisconsin, John Engler of Michigan. That is where the creativity has come from, and that is why it is key that we eliminate the mandates that are imposed, and that is exactly what this legislation does.

There is a very important other item that tragically this President has failed to address, but it is one that he has indicated that he would address, as we look at this issue of welfare reform. It has to do with the problem of illegal immigration, a very serious problem in California, and we found most recently in a wide range of other States from concern that has come forward from Members from around the country.

Let me take just a moment, Mr. Speaker, to look at the record that this President has had on the issue of illegal immigration. He opposed Proposition 187, strongly opposed that legislation. Two weeks ago he vetoed legislation that would have provided $3.5 billion to keep open the California hospitals that have been swamped by illegal immigrants.

Just this week he vetoed funding to put 1,000 new INS guards on the border and provide over $280 million to California prisons swelled by illegal immigrant felons.

If he vetoes this bill, Mr. Speaker, he will ensure that illegal immigrants continue to qualify for Federal and State welfare programs. It is a very sad record on the issue of illegal immigration.

He has an opportunity, by signing this bill, to end welfare as we know it and, in fact, reverse his record on the issue of illegal immigration.

I urge support of this rule, and I urge support of this conference report so that we can, in fact, end welfare as we know it.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from California [Ms. PELOSI].

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

I want to also commend him for his leadership for children in our country and throughout the world. His approach to this problem has been effective and, indeed, even saintly, in keeping with the words of the Bible, to feed the hungry, in the words of Matthew, to provide for the least, I'd rather say, the poorest of our brethren. I thank him for that leadership.

I thank the gentleman from New York for bringing this to the floor.

I rise in opposition with the greatest respect for the chairman of the committee, the gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON]; I rise in opposition to the rule and in opposition to the bill. I rise in opposition to the conference report because I think this legislation will devastate the working poor, children, legal immigrants, the elderly, and the disabled.

I listened attentively to the remarks of our colleague, the gentleman from California [Mr. DREIER], about welfare reform, and indeed we all stipulate to the fact that the welfare system in our country must be reformed.

I served as a cochairman of the Democratic platform committee with Gov. Roy Roemer of Colorado in the election year of 1992, and, yes, indeed, we had strong language making changes in the welfare system so that it better meets the needs of our people and gets them from welfare to work.

This bill, this conference report, is weak on work and tough on children. I consider it a heartless proposal and completely irresponsible in its intent to cut off families and children from the help they so desperately need.

I was helping some people collect gifts for poor children and one of the children said, ''Doesn't Santa come to the homes of poor children?'' Even little children know of the unfairness and of the inequity when small children have to be dependent on the largess of others. We must have public policy that enables people to take charge of their lives and to go to work.

The bill cheats our most vulnerable citizens. Our Nation's most vulnerable, poor children, two-thirds of welfare recipients are children, as a result of this bill, 1.2 million, as many as 2 million more children, could be pushed into poverty.

Our children are our future. We all say that, but we have to do something about it. This bill jeopardizes their health, safety and education. We are giving them far less than they need and certainly less than they deserve.

This bill, as I have said, is weak on work. One of the main problems of the current welfare system is the lack of sufficient funding for work programs. This bill does not even begin to provide adequate resources for work programs. It punishes parents who want to work by offering no reasonable and long-term solution to child care dilemmas faced by working families.

Lack of funding for work programs provides stronger incentives to States to cut families off the welfare rolls. Then where will these people go? What will these people do? This bill does not answer those questions, because it does nothing to promote effective programs for moving larger numbers of families off welfare and into work.

This bill cruelly discriminates against legal immigrants, punishing those who contribute to our economy and volunteer to serve in our military and whom we require to pay taxes. The overwhelming majority of legal immigrants support themselves without any government assistance. They contribute $25 billion more in annual taxes than they receive in benefits. Their goal is not to arrive in this country to be supported by it but to contribute to this country.

The so-called welfare reform bill fails to fulfill a promise by moving people from welfare to work. This is not the way to reform our welfare system.

I urge my colleagues to defeat this very harmful legislation. Vote ''no'' on the rule, vote ''no'' on the conference report, vote ''yes'' on the motion to recommit.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GIBBONS], the ranking minority member, former chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, where is everybody? I look around the floor today, and this is about the paltriest guard I think I have ever seen in the place. I am not talking about the quality of the people here. There is nobody here. There are far more staff here than there are Members.

This is a very important piece of legislation that we are taking up. I know Members hated to be reminded of this, but 70 percent of all the people we are talking about today are infants and children who had nothing to do with being brought into this world, have been cast in dysfunctional environments. I started to say families, but they really are not families. They have a mother they can probably identify, probably identify, and most of them cannot identify their father.

□ 1215

These are really pitiful people we are talking about, and yet this is a cruel bill. It reduces the amount of money we are going to spend on them for health care, for food, and for shelter. It puts the money under the block grant system, where the problem used to be. It does not put it under an entitlement system, where the problem is today.

All of us know that the poverty figures and the dependent children figures vary around the United States, having to do mainly with the economy of that particular area of the country. My own State was blasted a couple of years ago, a few years ago, with a huge increase in welfare. It had nothing to do with our morals, nothing to do with anything else. It is just the jobs were not there and the people had to turn to welfare to exist.

Mr. Speaker, I guess at Christmastime, shame on us. It is a horrible excuse of people here, and it is a horrible

excuse of attention we are giving to this subject. This bill is cruel, it is mean, and it is hurting the least viable part of our whole American family that we have, the infants and the children. We are taking away food, we are taking away health care, and we are taking away shelter from the people that need it most.

I guess Scrooge had it right. It is a Merry Christmas for some people, but not for the ones who need the help.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, we just heard from the gentleman from Tampa, FL, and I now yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Sanibel, FL [Mr. GOSS], a member of the Committee on Rules, so we can now hear the other side of the story.

(Mr. GOSS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, I am not feeling paltry today, Mr. Speaker. I admit to being a little fatigued, but not paltry.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Glens Falls, for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this rule to allow us to consider the conference report on H.R. 4, the welfare reform bill.

Despite the conspicuous lack of consistent leadership from the White House, Congress has carried this bill through. There are two reasons we need this legislation. The first is that the current system is riddled with waste and abuse of tax dollars, and I am pleased that H.R. 4 will save taxpayers some $58 billion over 7 years. But more important than money, we need this reform because the existing system simply does not work for those who need it.

Instead, we have designed a new system that will identify and protect Americans in their times of real need but will eliminate the never-ending cycle of dependency and illegitimacy that the current status quo system has fostered.

With the help of the States, we are going to encourage people to work, to make them productive contributors to American society, giving them the dignity and sense of worth that a job provides.

For our children, this bill makes two key changes. It encourages parents to work, and it aims to break the vicious circle of teenage pregnancy by unwed mothers. These reforms, along with our efforts to reform education and public housing should help us make progress in our efforts to renew our cities and save our at-risk children.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let us look at what H.R. 4 does not do. The President says funds for child care are being cut. Not true. They are going to go up faster under this bill than under current law. The President says that disabled children will not receive Social Security Income benefits. Not true. We are eliminating Social Security Income checks for kids that are hyperactive, but not for disabled children in need of special care.

This bill is a good bill and it is a promise that we made as part of the Contract With America. Once again we are keeping our promises.

I urge adoption of the rule and passage of this important bill.

Mr. Speaker, I will say that the status quo does not work. It is bad government. We know that. Everybody knows the system is broke. We know that scaring Americans with skewed statistics is bad governance, it is not the way to do it. The gentlewoman from California before me spoke and she said just say no to this rule; just say no to this bill.

There is a time to just say no, but this is not the time to just say no. This bill has been through the process. We are at the conference report process. Both houses have had a chance to work on it. I urge adoption. It is a good bill, it is a good rule, and there is no reason to say no.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER].

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I must say everybody knows the politically popular applause line is to come down and bash people on welfare. But let me tell you, this welfare bill, if this passes, it will bring a whole new meaning to the phrase ''suffer the little children,'' because that is exactly what this welfare bill will do. It will be little children that suffer.

Now, people will stand up and tell you all sorts of things that we could do, and I would agree. I see the gentlewoman from New Jersey. She and I have worked forever trying to get some of these things done. But they are not being done.

We just saw the Health and Human Services report on how much child support is being collected in States. The State that is doing the best job is Minnesota, and they are collecting 38 percent. The gentleman from New York's State is getting about 15 percent. Florida is getting about 15 percent. You know, all these people are saying this, but they do not go out and do anything about it.

Car payments seem to be made in this country at a percentage of over 90 percent, and yet here these children are, and we blame the mother for struggling and trying to make ends meet. We do not do anything about the father. I am sorry, I hope all of you took biology class. None of these children got here with just the mother, and we let the father walk. Then, of course, other people who are working get angry that they are supporting that child. But constantly blaming the mother and blaming that child is the wrong thing to do. So saying to that child, ''Oh, we are going to show you; we will take your health care, we will cut back the aid to your family,'' is just not the right thing to do.

Real reform is terribly important. I am all for real reform. But the thing this body does not want to hear is that real reform takes a lot more money, because you have got to do job training, you have got to get the mothers up with a better skill base, and you have got to spend the money to enforce the child support payments that are not being done, and that is a shame.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I am glad the gentlewoman agrees with us that the main focus of this is so that all those male parents that left my State of New York and went to Colorado, now we can go after them and get them. We are going to.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to a very distinguished gentlewoman from New Jersey [Mrs. ROUKEMA].

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule and the bill. This is landmark legislation and it has my support. We must enact it now. The American people are demanding that we restore the notion of individual responsibility and self-reliance.

The system is currently out of control. Above all else, I want to stress, and here I find myself in contradiction to one of my closest colleagues, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HALL], he and I have worked together on numbers of issues regarding children, but I want to say that I not only want to restore self-reliance and responsibility, but we will not let innocent children go hungry and homeless. I believe that this conference report meets that test.

First, the bill requires welfare recipients to work, as have already been stated. It also places time limits on them. That has been talked about. The third thing this bill does is put a family cap in place, which means that mothers will not get extra cash benefits for having babies.

Here I want to report that New Jersey already has this policy in place, and it is working. It was initiated in New Jersey by Democrats, developed bipartisan support, and was enthusiastically signed by a Democrat Governor, and it is working.

Fourth, this bill has strong and effective child support enforcement. My colleague from Colorado, I have got to disagree with her. The heart of this bill is that it enacts the strong interstate child support enforcement measures that she and I have worked on for more than 10 years. It specifically requires interstate cooperation, and it gets to the heart of that issue that has been vexing us. It is strange how as soon as you threaten to remove a driver's license or a professional license, the money that was never there strangely shows up.That reform is in here. It is the Roukema amendment, it was retained, and it is in here.

Let me just say one more point, because it is very important, on the nutrition aspects. I opposed the House position on school lunches and WIC. I am pleased to say the Senate got it right. The Senate protects the school lunch program and keeps the WIC program, as the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HALL] and I both desired.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that the President promised to end welfare as we know it. This is the bill where we can do that.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. FORD].

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Ohio for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the rule on the conference report on welfare today. Mr. Speaker, Democrats on the Committee on Ways and Means and on this side of the aisle, we tried over and over and over again to work with the Republicans to fashion a welfare reform package that would respond to the needs of poor children in this country. We know that the Republicans who have reported this bill and this conference report, we have seen letters go from five Members of the Senate and from their side of the aisle that have indicated this is not what the Senate voted on and the Senate passed in their welfare package.

We look and see that since 1935 we have protected our poor children in this country through an entitlement program with AFDC. Two-thirds of the welfare recipients are in fact poor children in this Nation. It is sad to know that here on Christmas Eve, we would send a message to more than 1.5 to 2 million children who will drop right into the poverty thresholds with this welfare reform package that is before us today.

The Republicans talk about them being tough on work. This program is due to fail. It will fail. We ought to make sure that a welfare package in the recommittal motion by the Democrats will say to poor children that we will provide the protection you need. Yes, we want a strong work program as Democrats. The President wants a strong work program for the welfare recipients. Those who are able to work should work. We are in agreement with that. But when you see a work program that is due to fail, as we know that that which is in this Republican conference report that we will vote on today will, it suggests very strongly that this is a bad bill. The Republicans ought to be ashamed of a bill that is so cruel to our poor children in this country, and I would urge my colleagues to vote no on this rule.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. CLEMENT].

Mr. CLEMENT. Mr. Speaker, 2 years ago five House Democrats, including myself, set out to end welfare as we know it. Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed today that the House and Senate conferees have presented the American people with welfare as we would never want to know it.

Ever since coming to Congress in 1988, I have been a strong advocate of a tough but reasonable welfare reform bill that empowers rather than punishes; one that calls for responsibility rather than dependence. The House Democrats and one Republican voted unanimously in support of our bill in March. Now we are given a conference report which is fundamentally different from that bill.

I want to highlight some of the differences. Our bill preserved the basic guarantees of assistance for poor, hungry, ill, disabled, abused, and neglected children and women. the conference report makes these guarantees optional. Our bill would retain the cash assistance entitlement, but the conference agreement eliminates this guarantee. Our bill maintains the AFDC program and the State match, while making needed reforms to AFDC. The conference agreement block-grants AFDC, allowing States to use the Federal funds as they wish.

Our bill would provide $8.6 billion over 5 years for work programs. The conference report is weak on work, providing no additional funds to states for work programs. If mothers or fathers are trying to escape welfare to work, they must have adequate funding for childcare. Our bill provides that increased Federal match for childcare. The conference agreement is at least $20 billion short in childcare funding. Our bill makes no changes to the successful school lunch and WIC programs. The conference report works toward eliminating this basic guarantee for low income children.

Vote ''no.''

□ 1230

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to say that the gentleman is right, his bill is the status quo and ours is welfare reform.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Kansas [Mrs. MEYERS] one of the most outstanding women ever to serve in this body. She will be leaving here next year. She will not seek reelection. She is from Overland Park, KS, and truly a compassionate Member and we will miss her.

Mrs. MEYERS of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time and for his leadership and everyone who has been responsible for bringing this issue to the floor.

I rise in strong support of this rule and of this bill. My principal concern has been AFDC. I believe that one look at the statistics shows that what started as a program to help people has become an incentive to join the system.

In 1988, when we reformed welfare, we said that there would be 5 million families on welfare by the year 1988. Well, we hit that target in 1993. The system is out of control. In just 4 years, by the year 2000, if we do not make changes, 80 percent of minority children and 40 percent of all children in this country will be born out of wedlock.

There is a tremendous human cost to this. Statistically, we know that children who get a kind of a chaotic start in life, and many of these children do, not all of them, but many, without a father, without a lot of structure in their lives, they have more trouble throughout their lives with education, health and with crime. This bill has time limits and work programs and it ends the entitlement nature of AFDC.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that it will end the incentive to join welfare. The current entitlement system has been very difficult for Congress and the taxpayer because a child out of wedlock usually means that the Government pays for that child and supports the child until he or she is 18. A young woman who has two children out of wedlock can receive cash and benefits of $18,000 annually. In the cash grant of AFDC, the portion of Medicaid and food stamps attributable to the AFDC population, housing, WIC, Head Start, college, day care, transportation, the cost to the taxpayer annually is $70 billion a year.

Mr. Speaker, we must insist for both human reasons and money reasons that we get control of this entitlement and control of the cost. Support the rule and the bill.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California [Ms. LOFGREN].

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this rule. Until this year, I was a member of a local government, and we actually had the responsibility to make AFDC work; and I ran for Congress wanting to change welfare as we know it. We do need to make changes.

As I listen to the debate here, I am mindful that many of the people in this Chamber have never had to actually make these programs work at a local level. It is not the Governors who make this work, it is the counties and cities throughout our country.

I have here a letter I received today from the League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors, urging us to vote ''No'' on the welfare reform conference report. They understand that block granting in their words, ''dismantles the critical safety net for children and families.''

They point out that without an individual entitlement they will not have sufficient funds to provide child protective services. They say the restrictions on legal immigration go too far and will transfer costs to local government. They point out that the block granting of child nutrition programs is wrong in that a child's educational success is essential to the economic well-being of our Nation's local communities. And, they say the welfare reform conference agreement would shift costs and liability and create new unfunded mandates for local governments, leaving them with two options: cut other essential services, such as law enforcement, or raise revenues.

Earlier this week I called two people upon whose advice I rely: a friend who is an administrator of my county and a Catholic priest, and they both urged me to vote against this conference report for similar reasons. It does not adequately emphasize the well-being of children. I came here to reform welfare, not to dismantle it for a simple

budget cut. This bill does not achieve reform, it just achieves a cut.

Finally, I wanted to say that I saw an article in my local paper today by Governor Pete Wilson urging that we support this legislation and suggesting that he has exhibited creativity. Do not make me laugh. All he has done is taken local governments' property taxes, and unloaded the problems on them.

I would urge a ''no'' vote and hope that we get back to a real reform of welfare.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, yielding myself 30 seconds, I would point out to the gentlewoman that, first of all, she should speak to her Democratic Members of the Committee on Rules. They all support this rule, as they should, because it is an ordinary customary rule.

Second, having serving as a town mayor, a county legislator and a State legislator, and 17 years in this Congress, I assure the gentlewoman this is a step in the right direction and we are going to pass this bill and get true welfare reform in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Ocala, FL, Mr. CLIFF STEARNS, another Floridian who is an outstanding Member of this body. He has done more to help us balance this budget than anyone I know.

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule and this bill. Let me say to the people on this side of the aisle, no one party has a corner on compassion. For 30 years we have had this program and we have spent $5 trillion. It has become obvious to the Democratic Party and obvious to our party that this program, as it is configured now, does not work and we have to change it.

For some of my colleagues to come on the floor all the time and say they have all the compassion, really the compassion comes when we try to take away, when we take an individual and take away their incentive to work. What happens is they do not want to work. We have doomed their life to continued dependency. That is not being compassionate, and that is what the debate is about. To show compassion is to give individuals incentive.

We must instill in our young people a sense of pride that can only be realized through hard work and personal achievement. What is wrong with that? This country was founded on the work ethic. Passage of this legislation sends a clear signal that we are no longer going to subsidize and reward individuals who have chosen to take a check instead of a job.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. LEVIN].

(Mr. LEVIN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, let it be clear that the status quo on welfare is dead. It needs to be changed. The House Democrats put together a proposition to change it. The key is getting the parents off of welfare into work and not punishing the kids. Punishment of children is not welfare reform, it is getting their parents off of welfare into work.

Here is the problem with the conference report, it is weak on work. The CBO estimates in the year 2002 that this conference report will be $7.5 billion short in terms of assistance to get people into work and child care. It is weak on work and it is tough on kids.

Just read the letter signed by four, I think more than that, Republican Senators, and they pick out the food stamp cuts of $30 billion, the SSI benefit cuts of 25 percent for 650,000 kids, the foster care changes, the legal immigrant provisions. These are extreme provisions.

Here is what the Republican Senators say. ''We are dismayed at what is in the conference report. We have our strong reservations about this agreement.''

Mr. Speaker, we have not worked here on a bipartisan basis. We have a highly partisan bill here that aims at a political message, but misses the key to welfare reform, moving parents off of welfare into work and not punishing their kids. We Democrats stand for that. Once this bill is turned down, and the President has said he will veto it, we will then turn and together work for true welfare reform that gets the parent into the work force without, as the Republicans do, punishing their children. Let us vote no on this conference report.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida, Mr. CLAY SHAW, who, as chairman of the subcommittee, along with Chairman of the full committee, the gentleman from Texas, BILL ARCHER, is one of the two outstanding Members that have had so much to do with this. I yield to him to respond and to give Members the straight story.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, the last speaker, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. LEVIN], on the floor, I have enjoyed working with him in the subcommittee and he and I have had a lot of conversations on and off the floor, in the subcommittee. We all want to do the right thing, and I applaud him for putting forth the fact that the welfare system that we have today is archaic, it is wrong, and it is bad.

But I want to point out a couple of things that I do not think the Senators were aware of that wrote the letter he referred to, and that I am not sure the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. LEVIN] is aware of.

Under the new baseline, we are spending more in this bill on Aid to Families with Dependent Children than we do under existing law. With the funding level that we have in child care, an area that I have spoken to the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. LEVIN] about several times, and I know he is very concerned about, there is an additional billion, which puts us way above, over a billion dollars over the Senate bill, which is the one the four Senators that he referred to voted for.

The question of the cuts in SSI. They were only for those children who are not seriously afflicted and it is recognizing that we need to keep full funding for those children who are truly disabled. It is a compassionate bill, a good bill, a good rule. I encourage the House to vote for the rule and for the bill.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. WYNN].

Mr. WYNN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

I rise today to oppose this rule because it is a bad rule supporting a bad bill. I am for welfare reform and I am for work requirements. The problem is that this bill fails in the commonsense department.

Let us turn to the CBO, their sacred cow for fiscal analysis. CBO says this bill cannot fund the work program. It cannot provide the training necessary. It says it falls $5.5 billion short in the year 2002. Over the 7 years, this bill is $14 billion short in what is needed to provide adequate employment and training.

In fact, their original Contract on America had $10 billion in it for employment and training. What happened? That is not in the bill.

Let me tell Members what the people of Maryland think. My Governor has already spoken on the subject, and he says, quite frankly, the idea is good, but the funding is grossly inadequate to support employment and training. We cannot take people who are out of work, who are low-skilled and expect them to go into the work force without training. There is no employer around, no matter how willing this person is to work, that will hire them without some level of training.

If we are serious about welfare reform and work requirements, we ought to put in the necessary funds for the training programs and not pass the buck on to the States.

What else is wrong with this bill? The child care is inadequate. That is the second component. We cannot expect women with two and three children to go to work without adequate child care. Right now States provide funds for the working poor. But with these new people coming onto the rolls, the States will not be able to afford to pay adequate child care. This bill falls $6 billion short in terms of providing the necessary child care programs.

Again, we go back to the CBO. CBO figures show that the legislation will force States to choose between maintaining current levels of child care assistance for working poor families and providing child care resources for these new families that are coming on.

So Mr. Speaker, the issue is not defending the status quo. We on the

Democratic side do want welfare reform, we just want to make sure it works, and that requires common sense, something that is sorely lacking in the Republican approach.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Jacksonville, FL, Mrs. TILLIE FOWLER, another outstanding woman Member of this body.

(Mrs. FOWLER asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. FOWLER. Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge passage of the rule for consideration of the conference report on H.R. 4. This historic legislation will fix a welfare system which has become so badly broken that it perpetuates dependence, illegitimacy, and hopelessness.

H.R. 4 reduces the intrusiveness of the Federal Government and provides flexibility for States and localities to meet the greatest needs.

It contains several provisions which discourage illegitimacy and encourage family responsibility, including one which allows States to deny additional benefits to parents who have additional children while on welfare. It provides for the creation of a nationwide tracking system for child support payments which will crack down on deadbeat parents.

In encourages independence by requiring adults who receive cash benefits to work or attend school and limiting their benefits to 5 years.

It also saves $58 billion in outlays over 7 years—while continuing to maintain a safety net for those in our society who are the most vulnerable.

This legislation is long overdue, and I urge passage of the rule and of the conference report.

□ 1245

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE].

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I have two children who are very young, and they were actually on the floor the other day. I also served in the State legislature in New Jersey for 5 or 6 years, and I mention that only by background because I am very concerned about the policy impact of this conference agreement and what it means for children in this country and my home State and other States.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned particularly about the elimination of the entitlement status. What I see happening in this conference report, and in many ways it is a lot worse than the bill that originally passed this House, is that we are making it a policy, essentially on AFDC, on Medicaid, to some extent also on some of the other programs, that it will be up to the States to decide who is eligible and what kind of cash benefits children get.

Mr. Speaker, I think that because we are dealing with such a vulnerable population, particularly with AFDC recipients, the tendency always is if there is a budget crunch, to cut back on the vulnerable amongst our population because they do not have the political clout. They are not the ones who can go to the State legislature and say, ''We are not going to vote for you, or vote one way or another, because of your position on these benefits.''

Mr. Speaker, if we look at the statement that some of the Senators made, that some of the Republican Senators made in the letter that they sent to Senator DOLE, they pointed out, for example, with regard to Medicaid, that unlike the House and the Senate bills, Medicaid no longer is an entitlement under this bill. They estimate, the Republican Senators, that we could be denying Medicaid eligibility to millions of women and to children over the age of 13.

Mr. Speaker, the same thing is true with SSI benefits, that due to significant changes in the definition of disability, the conference agreement would create a new 2-tiered system of eligibility which would result in a 25-percent reduction in SSI benefits.

Mr. Speaker, my concern here is that if we do not provide the entitlement status for some of these programs, whether it is Medicaid or AFDC, and then as the gentleman from Maryland said, we actually cut the amount of money that is available by as much as $14 billion, where are we going? A lot of people who are now receiving these benefits will not receive them. It is unconscionable and we have the obligation to ensure that the guarantee is there.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, how much time is remaining on either side?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TORKILDSEN). The gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON] has 7½ minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HALL] has 6 minutes remaining.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, there are 73 new Members on our side of the aisle, new Members of this body. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa [Mr. GANSKE], one of the outstanding new Members.

Mr. GANSKE. Mr. Speaker, not too long ago I was a physician taking care of young women and their children who are on welfare. My heart would go out to them, because very rarely would there be a dad with them. One of the reasons that I so enthusiastically support this rule and this bill is because it has significant improvements in the child support enforcement.

Mr. Speaker, it requires States to have automated case registries of child support ordered. It requires States to establish automated State directories. It allows States to use information for establishing paternity and forcing child support obligations and tracking. It establishes an automated Federal case registry of child support orders. It requires States to have specific laws related to paternity establishment, including a single civil process for establishing paternity. It requires States to tighten laws preventing the transfer of income or property for the purpose of avoiding child support payments.

These are all good things, long overdue, that this bill will significantly help.

Mr. Speaker, I have also been very concerned about nutrition, and I am happy that the conference report adds back $1.5 billion in child nutrition programs. The School Lunch Program continues to grow, as under current law. There are no cuts from the CBO baseline. The reimbursement rate for school lunches and breakfasts remains the same as under current law. The savings in the child nutrition program come mainly from setting up a 2-tiered system. This was proposed by President Clinton himself.

Basically, the 2-tiered system says that if communities have child care in low-income areas, they continue to get a higher reimbursement; but, if they have child care for families that are not poor, then they have to pay a little bit more in those areas. But, Mr. Speaker, if they can establish that the majority of the children in that child care program are from poor families, then they get the higher reimbursement. This is reasonable and I support the rule and the bill.

Mr. Hall of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. KENNEDY].

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of controversy that takes place about who ought to get credit for reforming welfare. It is almost as though this is a new issue. But I remember as a boy growing up hearing my father, Robert Kennedy, talk about the fact that welfare was a program in dire need of reform; that it has created a whole cycle of dependency; that we had a situation that had developed in so many of our Nation's cities that people had grown used to welfare as a way of life; and, that we had to break that cycle of dependency.

Mr. Speaker, I remember great speeches by Franklin Delano Roosevelt talking about people on the Government dole and the devastating and debilitating effects of being on the Government dole for the way of life and self-determination of those individual families. This is not a new issue.

But, Mr. Speaker, there is a sense that there is a lot of common ground between Democrats and Republicans about the fact that we need welfare reform. We do need welfare reform. We ought to tell people clearly that we do not want a system where they are rewarded and given something for nothing; that they can expect to have welfare without going out and getting a job; that we want to create any kind of signal that says that recipients ought to go out and have children on the welfare system.

Mr. Speaker, those are the areas of commonality. That is not what the difference is between what the Democrats have stood for in the bill that I voted for, and that many of my colleagues have voted for, and the bill that is before us today.

Mr. Speaker, the bill that is before us today is a mean-spirited attempt not to put people to work, but is a mean-spirited attempt to go out and gut the very programs that provide for our children with cerebral palsy, that provide for our children with Down's syndrome, that go out and cut the SSI Program, cut the Food Stamp Program.

My Republican colleagues sit there under the guise of welfare reform and try to hurt little children in America. They call that reform. Mr. Speaker, it is not reform. It is the mean-spirited dollars necessary to provide a tax cut to the wealthiest people in this country at a time when we ought to be looking out after how to break the cycle of dependency and not create one for the wealthy.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I am tempted to yield myself some time right now to respond to the gentleman from Massachusetts, but I will withhold until I conclude.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Stephensburg, KY [Mr. LEWIS], an outstanding Member of this body.

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, it seems we keep hearing the word ''extreme'' and ''mean-spirited'' and that we are ''gutting'' the welfare program, but I just want to address that just for a minute.

Mr. Speaker, I am holding an editorial by one of the fine newspapers in Kentucky, the Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer. In a Tuesday editorial they say, ''The Republicans have a sensible idea in moving decision-making authority closer to the frontlines,'' but then they make the mistake so many on the left do when describing our plan, just as the previous speaker, they suggest that it will fail because it spends less money than the current system. Wrong, wrong, wrong.

The Republican welfare reform will increase spending by one-third over the next 7 years from $83 billion to more than $111 billion. So, I say to my friends on the left, and to the Messenger-Inquirer for whom I have a great deal of respect: If you like moving power back home and want more welfare spending, you have got it. True, we may not be spending as much on welfare as you would like but $5 trillion over the last 30 years shows just throwing money at the problem is not the answer .

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON].

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this rule, and I rise in opposition to the rule because it is not really about reform. We need welfare reform, but this bill actually is a taking away of opportunity. In fact, it has been estimated that 1.3 million children will be denied opportunity through this bill.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the way we should talk about family values. Some of us feel that as we talk about family values we can scapegoat the poor. We can say that those children who happen not to be born in the prescribed way of a family, we should deny them food, deny them health care. That is unthinkable; unthinkable especially in the season of Christmas. Twenty-five percent of SSI benefiting kids with severe disability will be denied that opportunity. Is that reform? Is that taking?

Consider also AFDC children on Medicaid, that eligibility will now be determined by each State. Each State will decide as they proceed. School lunch, we would deny even feeding children, the least among us. This is not reform. This is taking from America's children.

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Utah [Mrs. WALDHOLTZ], another outstanding freshman woman, a member of our Committee on Rules, who has had so much input in dealing with absent fathers.

Mrs. WALDHOLTZ. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand in support of this rule and this bill. One of the fundamental principles of this bill is that people should be encouraged and rewarded for work, and this bill gives them that chance.

But parents cannot reasonably be expected to work their way out of dependency if their children are not safely cared for. So Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the conferees added additional funds for childcare even above the House-passed amendment sponsored by the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Mrs. JOHNSON], the gentlewoman from Ohio [Mr. PRYCE], the gentlewoman from Washington [Ms. DUNN], and I, that added more money for child care for low-income working parents.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to commend the conferees for including our provisions to make interstate enforcement of child support orders easier and less expensive. It is important that parents meet their obligations to their children, and this bill will help us require that of parents in divorce situations.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill and this rule.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE].

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I hope that we can engage my colleagues to the right in an intelligent, quiet, reasonable, and respectful dialog. Could my Republican colleagues do me a favor today? Stop painting those children and welfare recipients as bad people. Can we not come together to recognize that they cry out for a helping hand, not a handout?

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HALL] has been a fighter for hungry children. Welfare reform is about hungry children. And Mickey Leland, a predecessor in the 18th Congressional District, as I stand here remembering his spirit, he reached out for hungry children. This welfare reform is not that.

Mr. Speaker, it is a bad rule, it is a bad bill, because it does not provide an entitlement. Yes, America; I am going to say that. Not because I have not gone on record for welfare reform. I am proud to be part of 14 Democratic freshmen who came in on reform. But, Mr. Speaker, when I talk to my Republican colleagues, they tell me they want people to work.

Mr. Speaker, this bill does not have a working provision. I am less eloquent than my colleagues in county government, city government, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors who have said to me today there is no safety net. They are on the ground at home.

□ 1300

They represent you Republicans and Democrats and independents alike. It is not me on the House floor. My colleagues at home have said, ''Help us.''

This is a bad rule, a bad bill. There is no work.

And, yes, 350,000 children, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, cystic fibrosis, and suffering from AIDS, they will lose their SSI, excuse me, 650,000. Can we stop calling these people bad? Can we insist upon the kind of collegiality that knows that your bill is bad because it does not help people who want to transition?

I cry out on behalf of Mickey Leland and others who believe that hungry children should be fed. Vote this rule down and vote this bill down.

Mr. Speaker, I am inserting at this point in the RECORD a letter from the National League of Cities, National Association of Counties, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors, as follows:

DECEMBER 19, 1995.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the nation's local elected officials, we are writing to urge you to oppose H.R. 4, the conference agreement on the Personal Responsibility Act. Although the conferees agreed to some changes in the areas of foster care and consultation with local governments, we cannot support the final conference agreement which fails to address many of the other significant concerns of local governments. In particular, we object to the following provisions:

1. The bill ends the entitlement to Families with Dependent Children, thereby dismantling the critical safety net for children and their families.

2. The bill places foster care administration and training into a block grant. These funds provide basic services to our most vulnerable children. If administration and training do not remain an individual entitlement, our agencies will not have sufficient funds to provide the necessary child protective services, thereby placing more children at risk.

3. The eligibility restrictions for legal immigrants go too far and will shift substantial costs onto local governments. The most objectionable provisions include denying Supplemental Security Income and Food Stamps, particularly to older immigrants. Local governments cannot and should not be the safety net for federal policy decisions regarding immigration.

4. The work participation requirements are unrealistic, and funding for child care and

job training is not sufficient to meet these requirements. One example of the impracticality of these provisions is the removal of Senate language that would have allowed states to require lower hours of participation for parents with children under age six.

5. We remain very concerned with the possibility of any block granting of child nutrition programs. A strong federal role in child nutrition would continue to ensure an adequate level of nutrition assistance to children and their families. School lunch programs are necessary to ensure that children receive the nutrition they need to succeed in school. Children's educational success is essential to the economic well-being of our nation's local communities.

6. The implementation dates and transition periods are inadequate to make the changes necessary to comply with the legislation. We suggest delaying them until the next fiscal year.

As the level of government closest to the people, local elected officials understand the importance of reforming the welfare system. However, the welfare reform conference agreement would shift costs and liabilities and create new unfunded mandates for local governments, as well as penalize low income families. Such a bill, in combination with federal cuts and increased demands for services, will leave local governments with two options: cut other essential services, such as law enforcement, or raise revenues. We, therefore, urge you to vote against the conference agreement on H.R. 4.

Sincerely,

GREGORY S. LASHUTKA,
President, National League of Cities, Mayor, Columbus, OH.

DOUGLAS R. BOVIN,
President, National Association of Counties, Commissioner, Delta County, MI.

NORMAN B. RICE,
President, The U.S. Conference of Mayors, Mayor, Seattle, WA.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would just conclude by saying that the U.S. Catholic Conference, Bread for the World, Lutheran Social Services, they oppose the bill. The National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, they oppose the bill.

I think many of us, probably all of us in the Congress, we ran on the campaign, part of our issue was on welfare reform. We never expected welfare reform to be taking money away from children relative to food, shelter, and medical expenses. And I guess this bill is OK, I guess this bill is OK if you are a healthy person or you are a healthy child. But if you are going to eat a couple of meals a day or less, this bill is going to hurt you.

So we really ask, on this side, that you oppose this bill and oppose this conference report.

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

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, my good friend, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HALL], for whom I have great respect, has said he did not expect us to do what we said we were going to do. Ladies and gentlemen, we are here today doing exactly what we said we were going to do. This is part of the Contract for America.

I just have sat here patiently for an hour listening, and I have kept track of all the speakers, I say to the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HALL], from your side of the aisle, and every speaker without exception that I could find appears on the National Taxpayers' Union list of big spenders.

Almost every speaker from that side of the aisle has talked about maintaining the status quo. Ladies and gentlemen, what is compassionate about maintaining the status quo? It is a total failure.

I have heard the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. KENNEDY] stand up and talk about people in poverty. Let me tell you something friends, I was born 65 years ago into poverty. My dad walked out on my mother and me the day I was born. We never saw him again.

Ladies and gentlemen, we went through hell for 10 years. There were no jobs, and my mother would not take a nickel of welfare, and we fought our way out of it. That is what this bill does.

This bill changes that status quo, and God knows we need it. Let us give the poor people the work ethic. Let us put them back to work so there is no need for all of this kind of welfare.

Compassionate is balancing the budget, lowering this deficit so that our children and grandchildren have a chance to buy a home, to buy a car, to be able to afford it and not pay all of the increased interest that is there because of our fiscal irresponsibility over all of these years.

Let us just try something different. This bill, when it left the House, had $100 billion in savings. You know what it has today now that it is back here in the conference report? Only $58 billion. Everyone on your side of the aisle ought to say, OK, this is a compromise; it is not as tough as it was when it went out of here, like I want it to be.

So come over here, vote for this rule. It is a normal, customary rule, nothing unusual about it. It passed on a voice vote with all Democrats voting for it last night at midnight. Come over here and vote for the rule. Use your good judgment, but vote for something that is different. Vote for change.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The previous question was ordered.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, I call up the conference report on the bill (H.R. 4) to restore the American family, reduce illegitimacy, control welfare spending, and reduce welfare dependence.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LINDER). Pursuant to House Resolution 319, the conference report is considered as having been read.

(For conference report and statement, see prior proceedings of the House of today, Thursday, December 21, 1995.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARCHER] will be recognized for 30 minutes, and the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GIBBONS] will be recognized for 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARCHER].

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GOODLING], the chairman of the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities.

(Mr. GOODLING asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk about a portion of the bill that should make everyone happy, I mean everyone should be happy about the portion I am talking about, and that deals with school lunches and school breakfasts.

The House position was maintained as far as the reimbursement issue is concerned. We said no reduction in reimbursement without great flexibility for the provider. We kept the present reimbursement rates for school lunches and breakfasts.

Second, we make the school food service people very, very happy, and we do that by streamlining and eliminating the piles of rules and paperwork that they have to deal with every year. When they come here to testify before our committee each year, they say, ''We could feed more youngsters and we could do a better job if you would just get rid of some of the paperwork.'' So we have taken care of that and made the school food service people very, very happy.

At the same time, we allow the schools to use the old meal pattern as long as they meet the dietary guidelines.

Now, we do a third thing that should make everyone happy. Fifty percent of the youngsters who are eligible for free and reduced prices meals are not participating; I repeat, 50 percent who are eligible, free and reduced-price youngsters are not participating. That means in all probability we are trying to educate them on empty stomachs because I do not imagine they had money for breakfast. I do not imagine they had money for lunch. So we are going to try to do something about that 50 percent.

I am not worried about the 54 percent who are paying customers that do not participate, because I assume they have money. But we must do something about the 50 percent eligible for free and reduced-price meals who are not participating. What we do, we allow a 7-State demonstration program to see if those States can increase the participation, particularly for those most in need.

We keep the same nutrition guidelines. They must serve the same people. The same guidelines are in place,

but we give them an opportunity to see whether they cannot do something about bringing the 50 percent who positively need the program into the nutrition program.

So, again, I repeat, everyone should be happy with the portion that deals with breakfast and lunch because I think we have tried to satisfy every need that is out there.

Mr. Speaker, today marks a milestone in our efforts to reform, repair, redo the current system by which assistance is provided to many of our needy citizens. The current system has too often failed to truly help. It has encouraged dependence rather than independence. And it has failed the test of fairness to those who pay for it, the taxpayers.

This conference report comes at the end of a long and often difficult process. I want to express my appreciation of my colleagues who have not only worked so hard to achieve a conference agreement but stood firm in helping us negotiate with the other body to achieve a final agreement. I especially want to express my appreciation to the Speaker and to the majority leader, as well as to Chairman ARCHER and Chairman SHAW for their leadership during the conference with the Senate. Our committees have worked extremely close and extremely well together to bring this conference agreement to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, the American people have rightfully demanded change in the welfare system. This conference report delivers change. It is a good package, and it deserves the support of the House and of the Senate, and the signature of the President.

The conference report reflects the principles which we set out at the beginning of this process, and which, overwhelmingly, the American public supports. First of all, it reflects the recognition that no one, including those of us in Washington, has all of the answers as to what works best. One-size-fits-all mandates do not work well. States and communities must be given flexibility to meet their needs and the needs of those who require assistance.

Second, the conference report emphasizes that the purpose of welfare should be a temporary stop on the road back to independence, and the best way off welfare is a job. The work requirements under this legislation, spearheaded by Mr. TALENT and Mr. HUTCHINSON, will have a profound impact on the nature of welfare. Under this legislation, individuals on welfare for more than 2 years will be required to participate in a State work program. In addition, States will be required to meet strict Federal work participation rates, starting at 15 percent of their caseload and increasing to 50 percent by the year 2002.

The legislation allows for up to 20 percent of the State's participation to be met by vocational educational programs. The remainder must work at least 20 hours per week in actual work settings. By the year 2002, those hours are increased to 35 hours per week.

One of the problems with past work efforts has been the lack of effective sanctions for failing to participate. Under the conference report, individuals failing to work the required number of hours will have their benefits reduced accordingly.

I have maintained along that in order for welfare reform to work, there has to be sufficient provision for child care. I am pleased that we have been able to do that in this conference report. The conference report makes major improvements to child care. It provides more federal money for child care, it allows for a more efficient system for helping parents pay for child care, and it expands parental choice in child care providers.

The conference agreement streamlines 8 separate child care programs into a single program. This consolidation eliminates conflicting income requirements, time limits, and work requirements among the various current programs. These conflicting requirements have in too many cases become obstacles to independence from welfare, rather than programs assisting in reaching independence.

Under the conference agreement, child care funding is increased to $18 billion over 7 years. According to CBO, this increases the amount of child care funding over current law by $2.3 billion. The conference agreement simplifies child care programs by reducing Federal mandates, while ensuring that States provide for quality improvement activities and consumer education. Additionally, States must certify that procedures are in effect to ensure child care providers comply with all applicable State and local health and safety requirements and must certify that licensing standards for child care are in effect in the state.

We have worked hard, with the Ways and Means Committee, to improve and streamline the terribly fragmented and ineffective and inefficient array of programs that are supposed to help some of our most vulnerable people, children caught in abusive families and families that have otherwise been destroyed. It was with the best of intentions, I am sure, that all of these separate programs have been created. But the result is a maze of programs and a mountain of paperwork for States trying to make their child protection systems work. The legislation reduces the current maze of 18 different child protection programs into a streamlined system aimed at protecting children and reducing paperwork imposed on States.

Among other changes, the conference report combines numerous separate categorical programs which have been under our committee's jurisdiction into a new ''Child Protection Block Grant.'' The block grant will give States more flexibility in how they can best use these funds. At the same time, we maintain Federal oversight as to how these funds are used, and seek to insure, through certifications which the State must make in order to receive funds, that States will have effective child protection systems.

As my colleagues know, the child nutrition provisions of this bill were amongst the most difficult to resolve. Specifically, with regard to the school lunch and breakfast programs, I have maintained all along that, contrary to the claims of some of those who have demogogued one this issue, all is not well with the current programs. That is pretty obvious from the fact that only about 50 percent of the children who are eligible for free and reduced price meals even bother to take them. They'd rather pay for other food, or not eat, I guess, than take the meals that we offer for free or low cost.

The House position has been that any reduction in the rate of spending for these programs must be accompanied by greater flexibility for States and schools. Otherwise we simply make the situation even worse.

The conference report maintains the House position in that regard. It makes no changes in reimbursement rates for school lunches and breakfasts. At the same time, we have created a demonstration program, to allow up to 7 states to test the idea that if we give States a set amount of money, they can do a better job of serving low-income children than in the case with current program dictated from Washington.

While not reducing reimbursement rates, we have improved the current program by eliminating a number of obsolete and unnecessary provisions and streamlining some of the piles of rules and paperwork that have burdened schools is running the nutrition programs.

I want to mention specifically the issue of nutrition standards, which are provided for in the legislation, both in the existing school lunch program and in the demonstration program. No one is in a better position to determine what methods school food authorities should use to ensure that school meals adhere to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans than the school food authority itself. The changes which the conference committee has made to section 9(f) of the National School Lunch Act, with identical language carried over to the demonstration program, are intended to give school food authorities the ability to use the method they determine is best suited to their individual needs. This includes the meal pattern regulations in effect during the 1994-95 school year, in addition to the methods described in the National School Lunch Act.

In addition, the conference agreement achieves savings by targeting, for the first time, funds under the family day care food program toward more needy families. Currently there is no means testing of this program. While I would prefer to go further, and fully means test this food program like we do all other food programs, at least we made some headway in targeting funds toward more needy families.

Mr. Speaker, as I said at the beginning of my comments, this is a good bill. It makes major changes, and at the same time addresses the concerns which the President and others have had, such as sufficient funding for child care. We have listened to these concerns, and addressed them. The question now is, Will President Clinton have the courage to stick by his pledge to the American people to end welfare as we know it, or will he cave in to those who demand to keep the current failed welfare system? I urge my colleagues to vote for the conference agreement, and I urge the President to join with us in truly reforming the failed welfare system.

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds, and before I begin to speak, I would ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to yield my time to the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. FORD], the ranking minority member on the Committee on Human Resources, and that he be granted authority to yield time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, this is a lousy bill. The President is going to veto it so it will not ever become law.

The idea of giving block grants for this is like putting the money where the problem was a couple of years ago, not where the problem is today.

This bill is mean to children. Children are 70 percent of this bill, infants and children. It is mean to sick children, and it just should never become law.

We need welfare reform. Let us start over again, though, on this.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

I would just like to point out the National League of Cities and the National Association of Counties and the U.S. Conference of Mayors, they have all indicated that this bill ends entitlement for Aid to Families with Dependent Children, thereby dismantling the critical safety net for our children and our families.

We have a letter also from five Senate Members addressed to the majority leader in the Senate praising the Senate for their work on the vote of 87 to 12 in passing the welfare package. But they wrote a letter saying that they have strong reservations about this agreement that is before the House today in this conference report, and I would urge all of my colleagues to take a look at this to see that this is a bad bill for children in this Nation and the welfare population.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York [Mr. RANGEL].

(Mr. RANGEL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues, this is the night before Christmas, and history will record that the majority of the Members in this House decided that their priority before we go home for the holidays is to cut taxes by $245 billion. Sixty billions of those dollars will come out of the welfare program, and 70 percent of those dollars would normally go to children.

It has not been that many years ago we used to go to countries in South America and see people sleeping and living in the streets, and we said, ''Oh, how disgusting.'' and now in every major city throughout these great United States we find those homeless children and homeless people.

In some of the countries the families just kicked the kids out into the street to rob, to steal, to beg, and we say, ''Never in this country,'' and yet right now we are saying that this Federal Government will have no obligation to those children, that it would be left up to the Governors to decide what they should do. If the Governors decide that they cannot or will not do it, then they say, ''Well, let the mayors do it.'' The mayor says, ''For God's sake, don't give us that responsibility.'' But all of the Republicans say, ''It is part of the contract, that just because you are poor and blind and disabled, you are not entitled. The only thing you are entitled to is to go to the charities.''

And so, my brother and sister, what do they say? The National conference of Catholic Bishops say, ''Don't retreat from the Nation's commitment. Protect the poor children.'' The churches of the U.S.A., the American Jewish Congress, the National Councils of Churches, the United Church of Christ say, ''Don't appeal to affluent people at the expense of the poor children.''

This is the night before Christmas. Who would you want to listen to? Wall Street or our spiritual leaders?

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 4 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, this is truly an historic day. With this vote we arrive at a defining moment in our Nation's welfare reform debate.

□ 1315

At long last, the Congress and this President have an opportunity to show that we mean what we say.

We bring forward today a great bill, which includes participation and input from many Members on both sides of the aisle and the White House, a bill that after too long in waiting does truly reform our Nation's failed welfare system; not by rhetoric, but by substance. It turns today's welfare trap for the needy into a trampoline to self-sufficiency.

With this bill, we fulfill our promise to replace the failed welfare state, so that America's poor can achieve independence and enjoy successes that come from work. This bill achieves long overdue welfare reform by stressing work, personal responsibility, and the return of power and flexibility to the States.

Under this bill, welfare spending will continue to grow, by an average of 4 percent per year over the next 7 years.

The agreement provides more funds for childcare than under current law, but because the overall rate of growth in welfare spending is moderated, the conference report contributes to the goal of balancing the Federal budget by providing about $58 billion in total savings, relief for hard-working, tax paying Americans, who bear the load.

Finally, this agreement reflects a reenergized partnership with the States. For too long the needs of the poor have floundered on the flawed belief that Washington alone has all the answers; that Washington alone can provide for every need. It cannot, and it certainly cannot do so efficiently.

Local officials exercising local judgment can best determine how the poor can most help themselves and be helped where they need help. Helping America's poor was our goal when we began the process of reforming the failed welfare state, and this vote marks an historic step in what direction.

Mr. Speaker, with this vote we will have the opportunity to let our constituents know if we are for or against real welfare reform.

Earlier today 30 governors signed a letter to the President calling on him to sign this bill, to keep his word, to put his name, William Clinton, on the line. But if he does not, he will demonstrate that when it comes to welfare reform, this President is all talk and no action. He said he would end welfare as we know it. If he vetoes this bill, he will be remembered as the very liberal President who kept welfare as we have it.

Mr. Speaker, this is a great bill and a great opportunity to solve one of our Nation's most vexing problems. The previous Congresses ignored the cries of Republicans and conservative Democrats by refusing to take action. For years, Republicans and conservative Democrats worked together to achieve welfare reform.

With this vote, our efforts will be put to the test. This is a bill that only an extreme liberal could oppose. I urge all my colleagues to fix welfare and vote for his conference report.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California [Mr. MATSUI], who serves on the Committee on Ways and Means, and who has been in the forefront of welfare reform for many, many years in this Congress and who has spoke very eloquently on this issue for the children of this country for a long time.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Committee on Ways and Means for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I am astonished that this bill has finally reached the floor of the House in the shape it finally is in. it is somewhat ironic, because the Republicans have indicated that this will get people on welfare off welfare and into the work force.

In fact, there is a requirement by the year 2000, 5 years from now, that 50 percent of those people currently on welfare will be either in jobs or through a job training program. That sounds wonderful, and if you just think of the goals and the vision, we all as Americans support that goal and that vision. The problem is, they do not provide the resources.

I think anybody who has thought this issue through knows that before a woman can go off welfare into the work force, she has to have some kind of training. Because of the economy in America today, we do not have that kind of opportunity for a lot of people who have not graduated from high school or college.

For example, we do not have file clerks in America today who file papers alphabetically. I remember when I was a kid going through college, I would come back home and work as a file clerk for the State of California. All those people around me that were working full-time were women who had minor children. That job does not exist anymore, because we are a computerized society in America, so those women today are probably on welfare, AFDC. So you have to provide some kind of training for them. You also have to provide some kind of transportation for them. But, most of all, because by the law anybody on AFDC has minor children, you have to provide daycare for these people.

This bill does not have any of those provisions. They block grant generally AFDC and say okay, States, figure it out. You want to give this issue to the States. Think about it for a minute. The States, this is a group of States, 50 States, that have in fact messed up the education system of this country. Now you want to put AFDC and welfare in that mess as well.

This bill is mean spirited. It will put 2 million people into poverty, children into poverty. We need to vote down this conference report.

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. DEAL] who spent so much time this year in developing an alternative welfare reform plan, one that was offered as the Democrat substitute earlier this year and received all of the votes on the Democrat side.

Mr. DEAL of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, let me at the outset say that I recognize that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle now are sincere in their concerns about welfare reform. There is one issue that should not be partisan in this House, it is not partisan with the American people, and that is that the current system does not work. So as we measure this bill today against a standard, it maybe should not be the standard of what each of us in our individual point of view might prefer, but against the standard of where we are and where we are headed.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that by all of those measurements, the conference committee report is a substantial step in the right direction. Many of us worked together on parts of the bill that we voted for earlier this year, and I would say that if you look at this conference committee report, it has moved substantially toward the version that we worked for. It is substantially toward the version. In fact, it exceeds our version that we voted for earlier this year in the critical area of work requirements. All of the first 7 years the work requirements are in excess of the bill we voted for, and we criticized the House-passed version for being weak on work. This takes it even beyond where we were.

In terms of childcare, and I agree with the previous speakers that childcare is an important component of this, childcare funding has been substantially increased.

I would urge us to look at the bill compared with the system that is broken. I commend the conferees. I urge the adoption of this conference report.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. NEAL], who has cochaired the Democratic Task Force on Welfare and served on the Committee on Ways and Means and who has worked with all Democrats and tried to work with the Republicans as well on welfare reform.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, the essential point to remember here today, as the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. DEAL] has accurately said, in March of this year 204 Democrats came together to offer a tough and fair alternative. I helped to convince the Democratic caucus that this debate had shifted and we should move it to the center.

But the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. DEAL] is also correct, and I disagree with my friend, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. ARCHER], this proposal that we are being asked to vote on today is indeed extreme. Now, do not take it from me as one who has been immersed in the detail of the welfare legislation debate for the last year. Take it from ARLEN SPECTER, take it from JOHN CHAFEE, take it from BILL COHEN, from OLYMPIA SNOWE and JIM JEFFORDS, who have said in a letter to Senator DOLE dated yesterday, ''We are therefore dismayed at the significant changes made to the Senate bill in conference and are writing to let you know of our strong reservations about this agreement.''

The bill that the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. DEAL] offered here 9 months ago was a good strong piece of basic legislation. It involved a work requirement, it involved a time limit, but it also offered transitional assistance in the amount of $10 billion to women who were trying to get into the work force.

Yes, this debate has shifted, but it has shifted to an extreme element that is trying to change the contours of this debate. The truth is that the bill that this Democratic caucus voted for was the right bill, that was in the center, where all Americans are on this debate.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. CLAY], the ranking member of the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities, one who has been active in this debate on welfare reform.

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose this conference report. Descriptions of the Republican welfare plan have exhausted nearly every pejorative term found in Webster's Dictionary. ''Heartless,'' ''Cruel,'' ''Meanspirited,'' ''Disgraceful''; take your pick because each description is tragically accurate.

Under the guise of welfare reform, this bill would swell the ranks of the poor by more than 1 million children. How can our Nation be called civilized when the majority party in this Congress comes up with a proposal that would visit such dire, chaotic consequences on poor children?

For reasons totally unrelated to welfare reform Republicans want to experiment with programs which for decades have fed millions of children in schools and childcare centers. It is one thing to tinker with the names of Federal buildings, but another to tamper with the daily bread of little children.

Five million poor children were served a nutritious breakfast at school this morning, free of charge. Twenthfour million children will receive a nutritious school lunch this afternoon. Nearly half of these lunches are provided to poor children free of charge, and nearly 2 million lunches to low-income children at reduced prices.

Mr. Speaker, under the guise of eliminating bureaucracy and giving Governors flexibility, this conference report allows hunger prevention programs to be block granted. To experiment with these highly speculative block grants for nutrition and health programs is like playing Russian roulette with the lives of our young people.

For the past month, the Senate and House Republican conferees have had a food fight over school lunch block grants. They delayed final consideration of this conference report for months over an issue that has very little to do with welfare. Now, they have reached an agreement that would allow seven States to eliminate the Federal guarantee that every poor child will receive at least one solid meal a day.

I urge defeat of this heartless conference report.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Kansas [Mr. ROBERTS], the distinguished chairman of the Committee on Agriculture.

(Mr. ROBERTS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. Speaker, we all know that welfare reform has become a front-burner topic in this town and throughout the Nation. Last November the American public spoke decisively on wanting change. Welfare reform was a central theme in last fall's election. The House of Representatives has responded to the American public and I believe that real welfare reform can be found in the conference report before the House today.

The changes incorporated in the conference report on H.R. 4, the Personal Responsibility Act, represent real change. I congratulate members of the Committee on Agriculture and all Members who worked diligently on reforming the Food Stamp Program and the present welfare system.

The very first hearing held by me in the committee was on enforcement in the Food Stamp Program. Following that hearing, the chairman of the subcommittee held four hearings on the Food Stamp Program. From the testimony received in these hearings the committee formulated the principles that guided its reform. The conference agreement reflects these principles.

First, keep the Food Stamp Program as a safety net so that food can be provided as a basic need while States are undergoing the transition to State-design welfare programs.

Second, harmonize welfare and the Food Stamp Program for families receiving benefits from both programs.

Third, take the Food Stamp Program off automatic pilot.

Fourth, able-bodies participants without dependents must work in private sector jobs.

Fifth, tighten controls on waste and abuse and curb trafficking with increased penalties.

The Food Stamp Program provides benefits to an average of 27 million people each month at an annual cost of more than $25 billion. For the most part these benefits go to families in need of help and are used to buy food. There is no question in my mind that the Food Stamp Program helps poor people and those who have temporarily fallen on hard times. However, there is also no question in my mind that it is in need of reform.

The conference agreement reflects the principle that the Food Stamp Program should remain a Federal program. States will be undergoing a transition to State-designed welfare programs. During this period the Food Stamp Program will remain the safety net program and able to provide food as a basic need while this transition is taking place. The Food Stamp Program will remain at the Federal level and equal access to food for every American in need is ensured.

Given the hearing record, public support for real reform, and the dollars involved, the conference committee could not continue the program without significant reforms. The five hearings held in the Committee on Agriculture between February 1–14, 1995, dictated the course of the changes needed in the Food Stamp Program.

The agreement in the welfare reform conference adopted these changes. The Food Stamp Program is taken off of automatic pilot, except for annual increases in the cost of food, and control of spending for this program is returned to Congress. The food stamp deductions are kept at the current levels instead of being adjusted automatically for increases in the Consumer Price Index. Food stamp benefits will increase to reflect increase in the cost of food. Food stamp spending will no longer grow out of control. Oversight from the Agriculture Committee is essential so that when reforms are needed, the committee will act.

States are provided the option of harmonizing their new AFDC programs with the Food Stamp Program for those people receiving assistance from both programs. Since 1981, the committee has authorized demonstration projects aimed at simplifying the rules and regulations for those receiving assistance from AFDC and food stamps. States have complained for years about the disparity between AFDC and food stamp rules. This bill provides them the opportunity to reconcile these differences. It is now time to provide all States with this option.

The conference agreement on H.R. 4 contains a strong work program. Abled-bodied persons between the ages of 18 and 50 years, with no dependents, will be able to receive food stamps for 4 months. Eligibility will cease at the end of this period if they are not working at least 20 hours per week in a regular job. This rule will not apply to those who are in employment or training programs, such as those approved by the Governor of a State. A State may request a waiver of these rules if the unemployment rates are high or if there are a lack of jobs in an area. Republicans are not heartless, we just expect able-bodied people between 18 and 50 years, who have no one relying upon them, to work at least half-time if they want to continue to receive food stamps.

It is essential to begin to restore integrity to the Food Stamp Program. Incidences of fraud and abuse and losses to the program are steadily increasing and the public has lost confidence in the program. There are frequent reports in the press and on national television concerning abuses in the Food Stamp Program. Abuse of the program occurs in three ways: fraudulent receipt of benefits by recipients; street trafficking in food stamps by recipients; and trafficking offenses made by retail and wholesale grocers. H.R. 4 doubles the disqualification periods for food stamp participants who intentionally defraud the program. For the first offense the disqualification period is changed to 1 year; for the second offense the disqualification period is changed to 2 years. Food stamp recipients who are convicted for trafficking food stamps with a value over $500 will be permanently disqualified.

Trafficking by unethical wholesale and retail food stores is a serious problem. Benefits Congress appropriates for needy families are going to others who are making money from the program. Therefore the conference agreement limits the authorization period for stores and provides the Secretary of Agriculture with other means to ensure that only those stores abiding by the rules are authorized to accept food stamps. Finally, the conference includes a provision that all property used to traffic in food stamps and the proceeds traceable to any property used to traffic in food stamps will be subject to criminal forfeiture.

The electronic benefit transfer [EBT] systems have proven to be helpful in reducing street trafficking in food stamps and have provided law enforcement officers a trail through which they can find and prosecute traffickers. EBT systems do not end fraudulent activity in the Food Stamp Program; but they are instrumental in curbing the problem. Additionally, EBT is a more efficient method to issue food benefits for participants, States, food stores, and banks. For all of these reasons we include changes in the law to encourage States to go forward with EBT systems they deem most appropriate. Also the bill we are considering today lifts the restriction placed on State EBT systems by the Federal Reserve Board. This restriction is known as regulation E and it has hindered State progress on converting a coupon delivery system to an EBT system.

Mr. Speaker, this bill and the Agriculture Committee's contribution to the bill represent good policy. We have kept the Food Stamp Program as a safety net for families in need of food. We have taken the program off of automatic pilot and placed a ceiling on spending. We save $30 billion over 7 years. Congress is back in control of spending on food stamps. If additional funding is needed Congress will act to reform the program so that it operates within the amount of funding allowed or provide additional funding when necessary. States are provided with an option to harmonize food stamps with their new AFDC programs. We take steps to restore integrity to the Food Stamp Program by giving law enforcement and USDA additional means to curtail fraud and abuse. We encourage and facilitate EBT systems. We begin a strong work program so that able-bodied people with no dependents and who are between 18 and 50 years can receive food stamps for a limited amount of time without working.

This represents good food stamp policy. I hope all Members will agree with me and support the conference agreement on H.R. 4, the Personal Responsibility Act of 1995.

□ 1330

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California [Ms. WATERS], who has been very active with the Democratic Task Force on Welfare Reform.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, this conference report is not welfare reform. I support real welfare reform. I support transitioning recipients from dependency to work, to real jobs. This is simply slash and burn, causing 1.5 million more children to fall into poverty. If this is supposed to be welfare reform, why can we not assist these mothers in getting job training and getting education and transitioning into the job market? No, we do not do this.

This bill cuts job training. It simply block grants it, throws it to the States and says you train them. It is a mandate on local government and we do not fund it. If this is supposed to be welfare reform, why on heaven's earth do we cut child care? It does not take a rocket scientist to know that if mothers are to go to work, they must have child care.

To add insult to injury, this bill takes the safety net from child care protective services. As a matter of fact, I am shocked and surprised. Every time a child is murdered, like little Alicia up in New York, little Lisa 2 years ago in New York, we cry and bemoan the fact another child has been killed, yet we cut child care protective services. This bill is a sham. This is not real welfare reform.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me tell Members, because we block grant, we take away the possibility that when the middle-class clients and citizens lose their jobs or they are laid off and they want a little temporary help, if their State is in a recession, they are not going to be able to get it because

with this block granting we say when the money runs out, it runs out. There is no guarantee. There is no safety net, and so middle-class families who find themselves in a little difficulty will not have any support from welfare because we are taking away the safety net from them.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. TALENT].

Mr. TALENT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me time. I think colleagues refer to the historical context of this bill and also talk about the terrible job the States were doing with welfare. So I think it may be appropriate to respond a little to that.

Let us look at the historical context. In the immediate postwar era of 1948 the poverty rate in this country was about 30 percent. That was when the States and localities were handling welfare. It declined to about 15 percent in 1965, when the Federal Government declared war on poverty and took over the welfare system. In the last 30 years, the Federal Government has spent or mandated in State spending $5 trillion in entitlement spending and the poverty rate, which was 15 percent 30 years ago, is 15 percent today.

What we have gotten a six-fold increase in the out-of-wedlock- birthrate. And the reason is the two best anti-poverty programs are marriage and work, and the Federal Government has brilliantly conditioned welfare assistance on the people doing neither. That is the historical context of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, what we have done is taken away from the lower-income Americans in this country the institutions that make them happy, that make them secure, family, work, responsibility, and we have given them government, and it has been a total failure.

What does this bill try to do? It changes the welfare system so that, among other things, instead of punishing work, we encourage it and, in many cases, require it for able-bodied Americans. The bill says to the States they must have by about the end of the decade about 50 percent of the caseload working, and we mean actual work at actual labor, what the average American means by work.

Is this workable? It has been suggested it is not. Of course it is workable, if by work we do not mean we have to train them to be a vice president; if by work we do not mean we have to have a bureaucrat work out a personal employability program for them that will take 18 months before they have to do anything.

There are States already implementing real work requirements under waivers. Gov. Tommy Thompson of Wisconsin, when somebody applies for welfare there, if they do not have a small child at home who needs day care, he says, OK, go out, get work. And it has shrunk the welfare rolls.

Mr. Speaker, it is a good bill. If individuals are not liberals that believe in the failed system, they will be for this bill.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, may we inquire as to how much time is remaining on both sides?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LINDER). The gentleman from Florida [Mr. SHAW] has 17½ minutes, and the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. FORD] has 19½ minutes remaining.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Florida [Mrs. THURMAN].

Mrs. THURMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding time to me.

I stand here today as one of those who was the cosponsor of the first Democratic bill that we put forth on this floor, and I felt very strongly at that time that it was a good bill. Let me just point out to the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. DEAL], who spoke earlier, that we are still short in carrying out the work requirements of about $7 billion, according to CBO.

I want to talk about two other issues, Mr. Speaker, that I have heard on this floor for the last couple of months. The first one was that we had to move this government closer to home, to let those people make the decisions, those people that are elected in our local governments and our State legislatures.

Well, let me address the first issue, because these folks are saying H.R. 4 is the wrong way to go. They have sent out a letter and mentioned six very prominent points of concern that they have in this piece of legislation.

I want to talk about a second part of this letter, however, one that I supported on this floor in the beginning of the 104th Congress, one of two items in the contract that has gone to the President to be signed and that was an unfunded mandate.

The first time this is being tested these folks are saying we are going to create new unfunded mandates for local governments. Do not break your contract already.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Mrs. KENNELLY], the real champion of child support enforcement in this Congress and our friend.

Mrs. KENNELLY. Mr. Speaker, 3 days ago the Clinton administration approved my home State of Connecticut's welfare reform plan. Under this waiver, Connecticut will have the strictest time limit on welfare benefits in the country, 21 months, and children born on to welfare will have reduced benefits.

Along with these penalties, the plan will also provide certain rewards, including transitional child care and medical assistance for those leaving welfare for work.

I should point out that 34 other States have also had welfare reform plans approved by the current administration. So despite what some may say, the legislation before us is not necessary to provide States with the flexibility to implement their own reforms.

The main goal of this legislation would truly achieve would be to eliminate basic Federal protections for children. I do not think the American people believe that should be the central goal of welfare reform.

Americans want people to receive paychecks instead of welfare checks. For the life of me, I do not see how much of the bill before us would promote that fundamental goal. I do not understand what cutting SSI benefits for 1 million disabled children has to do with promoting work.

I do not understand what reducing food stamp benefits for 14 million children has to do with promoting work. I do not understand what eliminating the guarantee of services for foster-care families has to do with promoting work. I do not understand what block granting school lunches has to do with promoting work. And I do not understand what throwing 1.5 million children into poverty has to do with promoting work.

I very much want to vote for legislation that reforms our welfare system. But the bill before us is not welfare reform. It is merely a list of spending cuts on nearly every program designed to help children.

Real welfare reform focuses on how to move people from welfare to work. That means training, child care, medical assistance, and a strict requirement that you better be working or moving toward work.

Let us get back to that central goal. Instead of renouncing any Federal role in safeguarding children, let us pass legislation that demands responsibility, rewards work, and protects children.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. CAMP], a distinguished member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

(Mr. CAMP asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, today the Congress is presented with a historic opportunity to end welfare as we know it. The welfare system we have come to know is one that has failed. It has failed those dependent upon it. And it has failed the American people who believed it would end poverty. Nothing could be crueler or more heartless than the current system.

Our current welfare system imposes excessive bureaucratic regulations and guidelines on States. There are more than 340 different Federal welfare programs. In my State of Michigan, caseworkers spend 80 percent of their time complying with Federal regulations. The other 20 percent of their time is spent on personal contact with recipients. It is personal contact that often makes the difference between an individual's success and failure.

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act would allow

caseworkers more time to work directly with recipients instead of pushing paper. We eliminate unnecessary and duplicative programs. We block grant to the States in key areas including AFDC, child protection and child care $4 billion more than current levels for greater flexibility and effective targeting of critical welfare resources. We empower people to take responsibility for their lives so that success stories of individuals and families lifting themselves from poverty will become the norm instead of the exception.

Under our bill, Federal, State, and local officials will work in concert to move welfare recipients from a life of poverty and government dependence to a life of success and self-reliance. It also includes the State maintenance of effort requirement supported by Democrats and the administration that requires States to maintain spending on welfare programs.

In a bipartisan effort, we also strengthen paternity establishment and force dead-beat parents to pay child support. Most importantly, as my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and the President will agree, our bill not only encourages work, it requires it.

Support the conference report, end welfare as we know it.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York [Mr. OWENS].

(Mr. OWENS asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the conference report. The only entitlements being taken away by the Republican majority are means-tested entitlements to the poorest people in America. I hope we vote ''no'' on this bill.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minutes to the gentleman from California [Mr. FAZIO], the distinguished chair of the Democratic caucus here in the House.

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Tennessee for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, like any system its age, the welfare program needs to be reformed. The current system hinders self-sufficiency. It chips away at recipients personal dignity, perpetuates a cycle of poverty, and promote dependency.

But you can't reform welfare by simply taking away benefits while ignoring the basic needs that make people self-reliant—education, job training, and child care. Nor can you ignore the need for adequate nutrition and health care. You simply cannot mandate work without giving people a chance to develop the skills and work habits needed to support their families.

Unfortunately, the Republican bill on the floor does exactly that. They're not moving people off welfare to work—where they can take responsibility for their families. They're kicking them and their children into the streets.

What have we accomplished if all we do is take away the safety net and create a permanent underclass of unemployable people? What happens to the children who will grow up hungry, shelter bound, and poorly educated? These children deserve more than this bill is prepared to offer—they deserve a real future.

We know from looking at welfare-to-work programs that are successful, that there are two key elements that make real reform possible: job training and education. The proposal before us today fails miserably in both areas. This bill makes no accommodation for young mothers earning high school degrees. Instead, it simply mandates that they find a job. I don't know about you, but I am not aware of many employers anxious to hire teenage mothers without diplomas and without child care for even minimum wage jobs in this country.

As far as health services are concerned, the bill takes away the guarantee that those currently on assistance receive Medicaid benefits. So when they get sick, the people at the lowest income level in this country cannot get medical help.

The bill cuts food stamps by $35 Billion, and that's not just a number—it's 14 million children who are now fed by the program who will be removed. Only overwhelming opposition from both the Democratic and Republican parties prevented he School Lunch Program from also being decimated by this bill. How does taking the food out of the mouths of children help to reform the welfare system?

We have talked a lot about family values in this Congress. Where are those values now when we are trying to take people from poverty to productivity? How is valuing poor children less than our own children, who we have raised and loved, a family value?

I urge my colleagues to approach welfare reform with a long term view towards the future productivity of this country and not just a short-term goal towards saving a few tax dollars. If we truly hope to save money on the cost of welfare over time, we need to provide a transition that translates into permanent job responsibility.

Welfare reform isn't just about saving money—it's about saving families. Let's support welfare reform that allows these families to become responsible and self-reliant. If we save families, the savings in dollars and human lives to this country will be huge.

□ 1345

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DE LA GARZA], the distinguished ranking member of the Committee on Agriculture.

Mr. DE LA GARZA. Mr. Speaker, I regret exceedingly that I cannot vote for this conference report for a multiplicity of reasons. I, like many of my colleagues, came here willing and wanting to reform welfare as we know it, as it is being called here. Unfortunately, this legislation does not do that.

Mr. Speaker, in my estimation, it is used as a camouflage to go after programs we do not like. We are using the budget. We are using welfare reform to shut down programs that we do not like. I am more concerned, and I feel it very sincerely and I feel it in my heart, that we are targeting people that we do not like. That is what we are aiming at.

My colleagues can call it welfare reform, call it what they want. I can take my colleagues to the neighborhood; I can take them to the State; I can take them to the region; and, I can show them that this is targeting at its best people that they do not agree with, areas that they are not concerned about.

Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of need in my district. Everyone I meet wants to cut fraud and abuse. This does not give the State the tools to reduce fraud and abuse. My Republican colleagues are just shifting it over to the State. We took it over because the States had not done that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, a little bit about the conference. I say it with frustration and sadness. I never went to a conference committee meeting, except the initial meeting. I was not even asked to sign the report. I do not know who decided. I do not know where they met. I do not know when they met. I do not know when they put it in writing. Mr. Speaker, I am the ranking member of the Committee on Agriculture that has a section of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to talk, also, about the aliens, legal aliens. There is a Congressional Medal of Honor winner, Jose Francisco Jimenez, who died serving this country who was not a citizen. Lance Corporal Jimenez was a Marine killed in Viet Nam in 1969. He lived in Phoenix, was a Mexican citizen, but in the Untied States legally. My colleagues on the other side would aim at him and all people like him. Shame on those who want to target people that cannot defend themselves.

Mr. Speaker, House Democrats and Republicans, Senate Democrats and Republicans, and President Clinton share a common goal—all agree that welfare reform is urgently needed. Reform is needed not only for the recipients of welfare, who many times are trapped in a cycle of poverty from which they cannot escape, but also for the American taxpayers who deserve a better return on their investment in our future.

Currently, the American people lack confidence that many of our welfare programs, as they are currently designed, are really benefiting the recipients. This lack of confidence should not be translated into the idea that the American public is unwilling to spend any money on the needy. In fact, a recent Nielsen survey finds that 95 percent of Americans rate hunger and poverty issues equal to the issues of health care and a balanced budget. The lack of confidence in our welfare programs comes from the perception that waste, fraud, and abuse permeates many programs. These allegations need to be addressed in order to restore the confidence of the American people. However, we must be sure that we are addressing legitimate allegations and not some headline catching editorial writer whose hidden agenda is not program reform, but program elimination. It should be interpreted as a desire by the public to make sure that these programs are effectively designed and monitored to be effective and eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse.

We must remember that our goal is to reform welfare in order to move people toward self-sufficiency. Reform by itself is a hollow word. Reform for reform's sake is meaningless. We aren't OMB, CBO, or GAO. We can't work in the vacuum of numbers only. We cannot let the bureaucrats with the green eye shades determine what path reform will take. We are Members of Congress. It is our responsibility to put faces with these numbers. We must interject the human element into the process in order to ensure that real need is addressed in welfare reform. We must ensure that our children and the aged and disabled are not left unprotected. We must remember that a dollar spent now can actually result in saving thousands of dollars later, if we help produce a future tax paying citizen.

We must determine the policy that will move people toward self-sufficiency. This must be a policy-driven bill, not one that is driven by empty, faceless numbers that are wrong as many times as they are right.

When we look at these many programs designed to help the poorest of the poor, we must have the wisdom to be able to distinguish between those programs and policies that are working and filling a legitimate need and those that are not. We must not get wrapped up in the idea that just any reform is good reform. We must be deliberative and compassionate. We must have reform that meets the numbers, and not numbers that determine the reform.

When I go home to the 15th District of Texas every weekend, I am returning to one of the poorest areas of our country, an area where unemployment is in the double digits and newly arrived immigrants are searching for the American dream. Lest anyone think that there is no real need for many of these programs, one out of every two children in my district is living in poverty. My constituents don't want a hand-out. They want jobs. They want economic development. They want the American dream. These are the people we must help. These are the people for whom we must redesign these programs to help them achieve their desire of becoming successful citizens.

I am particularly concerned about what this bill will do to the Food Stamp Program, our frontline in the fight against hunger. It will jeopardize the nutritional status of millions of poor families because of a basic misunderstanding of how the program works. The perception is that this program is out of control, that hundreds of thousands of families are added to the food stamp rolls every month. The reality is something very different. Over the last year, as the economy has improved, food stamp participation has actually dropped by over 1 million people. This vital program is clearly filing a very real need. If the need isn't there, the program doesn't continue to expand, but if the need is there, the program is there to meet it.

The block grant provisions in this bill will set funding at levels well below that necessary to feed hungry families in times of recession or if food prices increase. If block grants had been chosen by all States in 1990, the Food Stamp Program would have served 8.3 million fewer children.

The funding cap imposed by this bill will put huge holes in the nutritional safety net. A cap takes away the flexibility to accommodate a decrease in a family's welfare benefits and the resultant increase in food stamp benefits. Efforts to raise the cap in the future by a well-intentioned Congress will be virtually impossible, requiring an offsetting tax increase, a cut in another entitlement, or an emergency designation.

To assure adequate nutrition and the good health of our poor families, the calculation of food stamp benefits must take into account extremely high housing expenses. The conference report limits this calculation, leaving poor families with children who pay more than half of their income for housing with less money to buy food. The provision will result in more hungry children.

We all want families on welfare to be self sufficient—they want to be self sufficient. But, the way to make families self sufficient is not to deny them food stamps after 4 months. Eighty percent of the able-bodied recipients between the ages of 18 and 50 receive food stamps on a temporary basis already, they leave the program within a year. What these people need most is the opportunity to work—job training, or a job slot. This bill simply kicks them off the program, without a helping hand to find a job.

Let me say once again, that we must reform these programs without the draconian cuts in funding. The goal should be to get more poor people into the work force, not to simply cut funding. By the year 2002, this bill will reduce benefits to families with children by 15 to 20 percent. Such cuts are unconscionable.

Finally, I must express the serious concerns that I share with my friends on the Congressional Hispanic Caucus about the provisions denying benefits to legal immigrants. Legal immigrants who work hard, play by the rules, pay taxes, and contribute greatly to our communities and society should not be denied access to social services when they fall on hard times, or when their sponsor falls on hard times. By denying benefits to legal immigrants, we will be shifting the responsibility to the States without any assistance from the Federal Government. State health care costs will increase as well as the costs to run State general assistance programs. I am shocked and saddened at the meaning of these provisions.

The American people are not mean-spirited. They do not want children to be poor and hungry. This bill will push 1 million children below the poverty line. How can we allow such a thing to happen? I urge Members to remember that we are reforming the programs that impact the most vulnerable of our constituents. We must remember the faces of the poor and hungry of our Nation. We must vote against this misguided attempt at welfare reform.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Washington [Ms. DUNN], a distinguished member of the Committee on ways and Means.

Ms. DUNN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I am relieved and gratified that the Senate and the House have finally agreed on a proposal that will end welfare as we know it. I believe everybody in this body would agree that the cruelest thing of all, Mr. Speaker, is to limit the ability of poor women to seek gainful work and condemn those women and their children to a life of hopelessness and dependence, where often in their child's life there is never a strong role model, a parent who works and provides for the family.

Nowhere is there a better example of where the current system has failed the family than in the area of child support. Mr. Speaker, today in our Nation $34 billion is owed in back child support, court-ordered child support by deadbeat parents who have walked out on their families.

The new child support provisions in this bill are the toughest ever passed by Congress. Under our bill, States will finally receive the assistance they need to track down deadbeat parents, especially the 30 percent who leave the State to escape their responsibilities.

Child support payments can be the difference between forcing a single parent, usually the mother, onto welfare or helping her make it on her own. Our bill helps these custodial parents stay off welfare and provides them the support they are owed so that they can make a better life for themselves and, even more importantly, for their children.

Mr. Speaker, now is the time for the President and all our colleagues to stand up for the Nation's custodial parents and their children, and to recognize our efforts to accommodate their concerns so that we truly can ''end welfare as we know it,'' as the President pledged.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 10 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to the gentlewoman from Washington [Ms. DUNN], my colleague on the Committee on Ways and Means, and to just say to my Republican colleagues that there would not be a single child support enforcement provision in this bill had it not been for the Democrats, who insisted upon this provision being in the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Hawaii [Mrs. MINK].

(Mrs. MINK of Hawaii asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, there are nearly 10 million children who are poor and who are victims of circumstances. These are the children that we are attempting to address in this so-called welfare reform bill.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to consider their circumstances. The only possible reason for voting for a welfare reform bill is if we have taken into consideration their circumstances, and improved their potential to have a better life in their respective communities. I say that this bill falls so far short that it is a tragedy to call it welfare reform.

Mr. Speaker, what we have done is to make an example for everyone to believe that we are doing something about the welfare system and trying to create a better circumstance for these families so they can get jobs. But look at the details of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues on the other side have taken away child care. How can anyone go to work if they do not have child care opportunities? How could there be a better circumstance

for these people if we cut them off of Medicaid support? This bill is a tragic example of harming our children, and I urge a ''no'' vote on the conference.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my outrage at the welfare reform legislation before us which promises harm to the most vulnerable Americans—the poor, the elderly, the disabled, and especially the children. Under this bill, appalling statistics we already face will worsen; 10 million of the 14 million Americans relying on welfare are children, and more than 1.5 million additional children could be forced into poverty under this bill that abolishes the essential safety net for poor families. It is a shame that the new majority in Congress, in the richest country in the world, has put such a low priority on children.

We would all like to say that American children are born into happy families with two loving parents and a warm home. We want to see our children provided with everything they need to grow into productive and responsible adults.

Instead, millions of American children are not this lucky. Many live in squalor, in rundown homes with tattered clothing and without food because a parent has lost a job or was injured or even killed. These are children of unfortunate circumstances. They do not deserve the punishment held in this irresponsible and shortsighted welfare bill. The new majority in Congress in crafting this bill was ended our contract with American children—to provide these children and their parents with a break when they are down on their luck.

During the first debate on this bill in March, every single Democrat supported a welfare reform proposal that continued the basic entitlement making up the Federal safety net for poor families. This bill before us removes the entitlement status and block grants many programs in the safety net, assuming that States will be able to make up the difference. States will be left vulnerable during recessions, when the numbers of those needing Government assistance always increase. The end of the entitlement means that no matter how many children may come to need cash assistance, child care, food, or protection from abuse or neglect, thousands of children per State will be without these services—discarded by the new Republican majority.

The bill fails low-income families who hold tremendous value for the work force by underfunding work programs, despite many success stories we hear from families who—with jobs paying a living wage—moved from poverty to self-sufficiency. Congressional Budget Office [CBO] figures show that conference report provisions combining work programs and cash assistance into a single block grant to the States falls $14.1 billion short of what CBO predicts will be needed over the next 7 years. Tough work requirements in the bill will hit States who will be forced to pay penalties for failing to comply. Cancelled work programs will deny low-income families the chance to escape poverty.

Child care, an essential component of the safety net, is also underfunded by $6 billion through fiscal year 1996, according to CBO. Neither States nor working poor families can be expected to comply with the bill's strict work requirements without providing adequate child care. Low-income parents already have very limited choices in this area compared to higher-income parents. Cuts in assistance make it virtually impossible for working poor families to secure quality child care that will assure their child's well-being while they work. Every parent should have access to safe, affordable child care.

The bill robs poor families of vital health care assistance. By severing the link between welfare and Medicaid, this Republican bill would add 3.8 million children and more than 4 million mothers to the scores of Americans without health insurance. This is in addition to proposals to block-grant the Medicaid Program which would guarantee that only a few children in a handful of States would be vaccinated. These so-called Medicaid reforms will put the health status of poor Americans children below those in many developing countries.

The new majority would dare to punish children who face special, everyday difficulties as a result of illness or physical impediment. The bill would cut by one-fourth Supplemental Security Income [SSI] for children with disabilities such as cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome, muscular dystrophy, cystic fibrosis, and AIDS. By 2002, 650,000 disabled children will be unable to receive SSI through harsh new eligibility requirements. Children whose benefits are reduced would suffer from reductions in assistance from 74 to 55 percent of poverty.

This bill fails poor Americans in their essential nutritional needs. This bill would block-grant the Food Stamp Program to threaten its future existence. Cuts of $32 billion in food stamps would hit families with a 20-percent reduction in average benefits, decreasing the per meal benefit from 78 to 62 cents. In denial of advances of the past three decades made in the nutritional safety net for poor households, this bill revises food stamps to eliminate all Federal standards, State assurances and flexibility to accommodate factors such as inflation, population growth or negative economic conditions.

Not only would this bill deny food to poor families at home, but also to children at school and to the country's smallest children. This Republican conference report would undermine the school lunch program by allowing a number of States to opt for block-grant funding—a move that would fail to allow for increasing costs of food faced by most schools today.

Programs which have protected millions of American children have been repealed under this bill, disregarding annual reports of child abuse and neglect of as many as 2.9 million children. This bill would block-grant foster care and adoption assistance funds which would cripple the ability of these programs to rescue children from abusive or unsafe situations, place children in appropriate homes, and recruit and train foster parents and parents wanting to adopt.

Finally, this bill scapegoats legal, taxpaying immigrants in this country, despite the fact that immigrants pay the Federal Government more than $70 billion in taxes annually—$25 billion more than immigrants use in services. The Republican plan unfairly restricts immigrant access to the safety net, arbitrarily prohibiting America's 22.6 million foreign-born residents from receiving food stamps and SSI unless and until they become citizens. States would be given the option to bar legal immigrants from Medicaid, temporary assistance for needy families, and title XX social services block grants. School lunches are arbitrarily denied to certain categories of immigrant school children—an unfunded mandate which would impose massive administrative burdens on schools. By denying women, infants and children [WIC] assistance to certain categories of pregnant women who are immigrants, this legislation ignores clear medical evidence that WIC has contributed to lower infant mortality and reductions in the incidence of low birthweight babies. It is outrageous to abandon immigrants who have complied in every way with U.S. law and who have earned their right to live peacefully in this country.

This Republican welfare reform conference report unrealistically looks at poor families as lazy castaways who want to receive welfare rather than work. It says if you are poor, you have to find a job but don't deserve job training or search assistance. It says if you are poor, your children aren't good enough for quality child care or health care. It says if you are poor, you are a second-class citizen whom the Government has no duty to help.

The new Republican majority in this bill deserts poor American children who need food, shelter, health care, protection, and other programs critical to their existence. I very strongly urge my colleagues to vote down this egregious legislation for the sake of America's children.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California [Mr. CUNNINGHAM].

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DE LA GARZA] my friend, there have been more Mexican-Americans win the Medal of Honor than any other group in the United States. They were here legally.

Mr. Speaker, this bill also affects, especially for the border States, illegal immigration. If you are here in this country illegally, I do not care if you are Irish, I do not want you to get a penny of services that the taxpayer pays for.

Just in the State of California, there are 800,000, we use the term 400,000 so that the figures cannot be disputed, illegal aliens K through 12. At $1.90 a meal, that is $1.2 million a day just on the school meals program. At $5,000 to educate a student, it is actually $4,750 in California, that is $2 billion to illegals.

Governor Wilson, $400 million in just emergency services, $400 million in emergency services just to illegal aliens. This bill eliminates services to illegal aliens. Let us focus on legal residents of this country that are in need. Take it away from those that do not belong here and have come here illegally and focus on what the system needs to take a look at.

Mr. Speaker, I submit the following article for the RECORD:

[From the San Diego Union-Tribune, Dec. 21, 1995]

MEDICAID SYSTEM HANDCUFFS CALIFORNIA

(By Pete Wilson)

Contrary to what the weather maps indicate, a hot-air front has stalled over the nation's capital. It's hot air in the form of deception and distortion over the transfer of income support programs to the states.

President Clinton and the congressional Democrats would have us believe that the current Medicaid system protects all vulnerable populations—and that, without the benevolent oversight of the federal government, those populations would be denied needed care and thus devastated by the insensitivity of callous governors. The former governor of Arkansas wants you to believe that current governors can't be trusted with the reins.

Regrettably, it's the same kind of shabby scare tactics that the White House used in the ''Mediscare'' campaign to hoodwink the elderly into believing that Republicans were cutting the bottom out of their safety net. The truth was, Republicans proposed reducing the increase in Medicare spending to 7.2 percent. In fact, in September 1993, Hillary Rodham Clinton suggested slowing Medicare growth ''to about 6 or 7 percent annually.''

With respect to Medicaid, the White House and liberal Democrats in Congress have been even more disingenuous. They want you to believe that governors who have balanced budgets—even with limited resources—can't be trusted to manage block grants without savaging the poor (as though anyone would want to savage the poor.)

The truth is, the ''benevolent'' federal government has fostered a Medicaid system that prevents states from helping their own residents. Here in California, for example, many children, families and low-income pregnant women are excluded from eligibility categories established by the Federal Government. Consequently, two-thirds of California's disadvantaged families lack health insurance.

To try to mend holes in the current system, California has chosen to use state-only money to fill in the gaps in Medicaid coverage created by Washington. We've implemented a program to provide prenatal and well-baby care to low-income pregnant women who do not qualify for Medicaid.

We've also proposed expanding a package of preventive health-care benefits to low-income children who don't qualify for Medicaid. Why does the Medicaid system hinder such efforts? More importantly, why is the White House defending such a system.

To add insult to injury, the federal government forces states to cover the health care costs of low-income illegal immigrants. This means that California, which carries nearly one-half of the illegal immigrant burden for the entire nation, must spend $400 million annually to provide health care for illegal immigrants, thus forcing us to reduce or deny benefits for needy legal residents.

If the White House took a closer look at California, it would see a state where health-care reforms are well under way. We've accelerated the enrollment of Medicaid recipients in managed-care programs. Those enrollees are guaranteed access to quality care, case management by a primary-care physician, and state monitoring of the care being provided.

California has managed to contain costs and deliver quality health care for about $1,600 per recipient per year (by contrast, some states have a more expensive program costing taxpayers over $4,500 per year, per Medicaid recipient.)

One would think that a state would be rewarded for such efficiency and innovation. But to the contrary, California is punished by a federal Medicaid funding scheme that fosters runaway growth and rewards inefficiency. States that have run efficient programs and manage costs effectively are penalized by a federal funding formula which results in huge funding inequities that choke state budgets and impede further reforms.

One might ask: Is there any way for Washington to make the Medicaid system worse? Regrettably, the answer is yes. President Clinton has proposed capping the growth in per-recipient expenditures, without giving states like California the tools to slow the growth in overall Medicaid expenditures. This would reduce growth in Medicaid payments by $54 billion over the next seven years.

As a result, California would have to find an additional $5 billion to make up for Washington's shortfall. In other words, we would be forced to keep the current federal system with all the federal rules and requirements—for less money to operate it.

As long as the current Medicaid system is in place, states will be blocked from implementing reforms that meet the health-care needs of our most vulnerable populations. The Republican MediGrant plan offers a better alternative by providing states with the flexibility they deserve to design more effective and cost-efficient systems of health-care delivery.

Clinton entered office promising Americans real health-care reform. Back then, he was asking the American people to trust a governor to run the federal government. Now, he won't trust governors to help him better manage federal health care.

Columnist David Broder has noted this inconsistency. As Broder writes, ''In his former life, Clinton, like every other governor, was complaining that federal Medicaid mandates were wrecking his state budget. Three years ago, in fact, Arkansas was being sued in the federal courts for jeopardizing the health of expectant others by slashing Medicaid spending—a policy Clinton then defended as necessary to save state funds for schools, roads and other important projects.''

The times have changed. With a former governor in the White House and a Congress willing to give states greater autonomy, Washington has the opportunity to do what's sensible: give states the freedom to enact health-care reform that benefits all Americans, and let Californians help Californians.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GOODLING] on the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities, who held firm, and I also thank the gentleman from Florida [Mr. SHAW].

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California [Ms. WOOLSEY], the cochair of the Democratic Welfare Reform Task Force.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, the weather outside is frightful, but it is nothing compared to the welfare bill we are considering today.

Just in time for Christmas, the new majority is putting the welfare reform package under the Christmas tree that will push at least 1.5 million children into poverty, and almost 4 million children into the ranks of the uninsured.

I cannot help but think of this Dr. Seuss tale, ''How the Grinch Stole Christmas,'' when I think about this bill. But this Grinch-like welfare bill is not just stealing Christmas from our Nation's most vulnerable children; it is stealing their safety net. Basically it tells children, if you are poor, do not get sick, do not get hungry, do not get cold, because we do not think you are important.

Mr. Speaker, as the only Member of this Congress who has actually been a mother on welfare, my ideas about welfare reform do not come from theories or books or movies like ''Boy's Town.'' I know it. I lived it, and as cochair of the House democratic task force on welfare, my experience was translated into legislation that 100 percent of the Democrats in the House voted for, legislation that gets parents into work and maintains the safety net for their children.

Mr. Speaker, that is the type of reform for welfare that American people want, and that is why I am urging that we defeat this bill and prevent poor children from becoming even poorer.

Mr. Speaker, let us make sure that the Grinch does not steal our children's Christmas. And, Mr. Speaker, in the words of Dr. Seuss, ''the Grinch hated Christmas, the whole Christmas season. Now please do not ask why. No one quite knows the reason. It could be his head was not screwed on just right. It could be perhaps that his shoes wee too tight. But I think that the most likely reason of all may have been that his heart was two sizes too small.''

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida has 12½ minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. FORD] has 10 minutes and 20 seconds remaining.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Missouri [Mr. EMERSON].

(Mr. EMERSON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EMERSON. Mr. Speaker, for the past decade this topic, I believe, of reforming welfare has been an abiding interest of mine. I have worked through three different administrations and many Congresses on this subject, and I have always been guided by the words of Abraham Lincoln, to the effect that ''The dogmas of the past are inadequate to the present. We must think anew and act anew.''

The present welfare system cannot be defended. It is a disgrace. The people who receive the assistance do not like it. The people who run it do not like it, and the taxpayers do not like it and are not going to stand for a continuation of the present welfare maintenance system.

Mr. Speaker, there are more programs in existence now for providing public assistance to poor families than at any time in the past, serving more people and costing more money. There has got to be a better way to help low-income people achieve their rightful place in our society as taxpayers and as mainstream members of society.

Mr. Speaker, the current President of the United States in the campaign of 1992 said, ''We must end welfare as it now exists.'' This conservative-dominated Congress has endeavored to do that, to provide some new approaches, to consolidate some programs, and to refine some programs. I believe that a good product has been produced here and that it would behoove all Members to support the Personal Responsibility Act, and I urge their positive vote on this conference report.

Mr. Speaker, for the past decade this topic of reforming welfare has been an abiding interest of mine. I am guided by the words of Abraham Lincoln ''The Dogmas of the past are inadequate to the present. We must think anew and act anew.''

The present welfare system cannot be defended. It is a disgrace. The people who receive the assistance do not like it; the people who run the system do not like it; and, the taxpayers will not stand for continuation of this present welfare maintenance system.

There are more programs now for providing public assistance to poor families than any time in the past, serving more people and costing more money. There must be a better way to help low-income people become taxpayers.

We currently have a welfare maintenance system, not one designed to provide temporary assistance and help people reclaim or gain a life.

Most needy families coming in to seek public assistance need help in at least three categories: Cash and the accompanying medical assistance, food, and, housing. The rules and regulations for these programs are different and in many cases conflicting. It does not make sense for the Federal Government to set up programs for poor families and then establish different rules for eligibility.

We need one program that provides a basic level of assistance for poor families; sets conditions for receipt of that assistance, including work; and then limits the amount of time families can receive public assistance.

Over the past 12 years, I have served on the Nutrition Subcommittee of the Agriculture Committee or the Select Committee on Hunger. I have looked at these welfare programs in depth; I have visited scores of welfare offices, soup kitchens, food banks; I have spoken to those administering the welfare programs and the people receiving the assistance.

I learned during my years serving on the Select Committee on Hunger that any one program does not comprehensively provide welfare for poor families; it takes two or more of the current programs to provide a basic level of help. When there are two or more programs with different rules and regulations people fall through the cracks in the system and also take advantage of the system.

This must stop. How anyone could defend the present structure and system is a puzzle to me; unless it is persons who benefit illicitly from the fractured welfare mess we find ourselves in today, be they welfare recipients who take advantage of the system or advocates who thrive on the power derived from establishing new programs. Advocates of a humane system, a cost-effective system, an efficient system, a system that helps people up, off and out could find little solace in the current system.

It is amazing to me that so many states have sought to change the welfare system through the waiver process, thereby recognizing the failure of the present system, without any action on the part of Congress to change the system as well. How many more States might try to institute reforms but for the maze of bureaucracy they must go to achieve waivers? What we have now is not a welfare system aimed at moving families off of welfare and onto the taxpayers rolls, but a maintenance system that thwarts State initiative and diversity and poorly helps poor families, exasperates the front line administrators running the programs, and is a frustration and burden to the people paying for this disastrous system.

I want to help reform the system; I want to change the way we delivery this help to poor families; and, I want to do it in an efficient, compassionate, and cost-effective manner.

The subcommittee that I chair held four hearings last February on the issue of reforming the present welfare system. We heard from the General Accounting Office on the multitude of programs that are now operating. we heard from a Governor who operates a welfare system that is dependent upon Federal Bureaucrats for waivers; a former Governor who had to devise a system to provide one-stop-shopping for participants; and State administrators who must deal with the day-to-day obstacles that are placed in their way by Federal rules and regulations. Witnesses traveled from all over the United Sates to tell the subcommittee of their experiences operating programs to help poor families. Two of the members of the Welfare Simplification and Coordination Advisory Committee told us of the experiences deliberating the complexities of the present system. Others provided the subcommittee with their ideas on how to improve the system.

The conference agreement on H.R. 4 improves the USDA commodity distribution programs and reforms the Food Stamp Program.

We consolidate food distribution programs and provide for an increase in authorizations for the new program. Remember, food is fundamental. The food distribution programs, such as the emergency food assistance program or TEFAP, are the front line of defense against hunger for needy individuals and families. Food banks, soup kitchens, churches and community organizations are always there with food when it is needed.

The Federal Government provides a portion of the food that is distributed through these programs. But it is an essential part and acts as seed money for food contributions from the private sector. If we did not have food distribution programs we would have to invent them. We consolidate programs and increase the money to buy food so that these worthwhile organizations, most of which are made up of volunteers, can continue the fine work they now do.

Under the conference agreement we reform the Food Stamp Program and it is in need of a lot of reform. The States are provided with an option to reconcile the differences between their new AFDC programs with the Food Stamp Program for those people receiving help from both programs. This has been one of my goals and I believe that we are on the road to a one-stop-shopping welfare system. Complete welfare reform will come. This is the first step in the long road to reform.

States are encouraged to go forward with an electronic benefit transfer system. EBT is the preferred way to issue food stamp benefits. This bill provides States with the ability to implement the EBT system they deem appropriate and the problems with the notorious regulation E are eliminated. EBT is a means to effectively issue food stamp benefits and a means to control and detect fraudulent activities in the program. I am especially gratified that EBT can become an integral part of the Food Stamp Program and other welfare programs.

The conference agreement includes provisions that take steps to restore integrity to the Food Stamp Program. The agreement provides criminal forfeiture authority so that criminals will pay a price for their illegal activities in food stamp trafficking. We double the penalties for recipient fraudulent activities and we give USDA the authority to better manage the food stores that are authorized to accept and redeem food stamps.

We include a strong work program. We say that if you are able-bodied and between 18 years and 50 years with no dependents, you can receive food stamps for four months. Following that you must be working in a regular job at least 20 hours a week—half-time work—or you will not receive food stamps. The American people cannot understand why people who can work do not do so. We say you will not receive food stamps forever if you do not work.

Unconstrained growth in the Food Stamp Program, due to the automatic increases built into the program and the changes made to the program over the past years, cannot continue. We restrain the growth in the program by limiting the indexing of food stamp income deductions. We provide increases in food stamp benefits based on annual changes in the cost of food. We place a ceiling on the spending in the program. It will be up to Congress to determine whether increases above the limits placed on the program will take place. This is the appropriate way in which to manage this program. If a supplemental appropriation is needed, it will be Congress that decides whether to provide the additional money or institute reforms in the program to restrain the growth.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good bill, with sound policy decisions incorporated. Remember, we have not ended the process of reforming welfare with the action we took last March and continue today. We are beginning the process of real reform. I urge my colleagues to support the principles of this bill and take this first step along with me. We cannot continue as we are today with a welfare system that is despised by all involved. The status quo is unacceptable.

Let us think anew and act anew.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from the State of Connecticut [Mrs. JOHNSON], a member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act. It is a significant improvement on the House-passed bill, and not only will it not suffer the children, but will provide women and children in need a window of opportunity to regain their independence from welfare.

I am particularly pleased with two titles of the bill that I have worked on for years: child protective services and child support enforcement.

We have 22 States currently under court order because their child welfare departments are failing in their mission to protect children in grossly abusive or neglectful families. Under the bill's child protective services title, foster care and adoption assistance payments remain entitlements, current

law protection standards are retained, States must maintain their spending and may not transfer funds to other programs as they can do between other block grants, and spending on this title will increase by 92 percent—from $3.3 billion to $6.3 billion in the year 2002.

In addition, the data collection section will allow us, for the very first time, to know how many children were in foster care last year, how long they stayed, what help they and their families received, and basic information we need to truly protect children. For the first time States will have to have citizen review boards, which, in States where they are well developed, have prevented kids from getting lost in the system, and prompted permanent placements and early intervention. And because it is new law, we will be monitoring States' performance very closely in upcoming years and learning from their experience to improve this legislation.

The child support title of this bill, based on the bipartisan Child Support Responsibility Act I was privileged to introduce earlier this year, takes giant steps toward enabling us to effectively collect child support. This is one area where national uniform law is important, since at least one-third of nonsupport cases involves more than one State. Immediate reporting of new employees to centralized State databanks will allow cross-checking with outstanding child support orders on an interstate basis for the first time. This, coupled with new power to cross-reference support orders with bank information and license information, will help literally millions of children enjoy a level of financial security not possible without the support from both parents.

And, finally, this is a families-first bill. For the first time, parents and children formerly on welfare will get paid the child support they are owed without having to wait for the States to get paid first. This families-first provision will help families to regain their independence and their hope. This is what welfare reform is all about—giving families the tools they need to help themselves. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of the H.R. 4 conference report before us today.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOGLIETTA].

(Mr. FOGLIETTA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.).

Mr. FOGLIETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the conference report.

I rise in opposition to the conference report on welfare reform.

The district that I represent is one of the 10 poorest in America, and so the implications of this bill are very real to a lot of my people. I oppose this bill because it begins and ends with the intent to punish the people on welfare. What we should be doing is working with people to help them get a job, and keep a job, help them get off welfare, and stay off welfare. Many of us have embraced the idea of "welfare to work."

But for many people, this bill will mean welfare to homelessness—and thus more Federal money will be spent. We're going backwards.

Because this issue is so important to my constituents, I started the year by laying eight principles as a framework for real welfare reform. The common idea behind these principles is simple—let's think about how people live their lives and help them live that life without welfare.

How can we get parents trained for real jobs, and get them a job? How can we keep mass transit viable, safe, and cheap so that people can get to their jobs? How can we get parents child care so they can feel secure, knowing their children are safe, as they work through the day?

These are just some of the principles I laid down—and based on those principles, I cannot support this conference report.

Punishment and arbitrariness is not the way to real welfare reform. This is especially unfortunate, because the ingredients are here for bipartisan agreement on this issue. The President should veto this bill and give us the opportunity to get to genuine reform.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this conference report.

□ 1400

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 30 seconds to our colleague, the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. HOYER].

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for his generosity.

Mr. Speaker, the current welfare system is at odds with the core values Americans share: work, opportunity, family, and responsibility.

Too many people who hate being on welfare are trying to escape it with unfortunately too little success. It is time for a fundamental change. In 30 second obviously I cannot analyze the changes that I would be for other than to say I was a strong supporter, and continue to support the Deal bill. The Deal bill was sponsored by a Democrat; the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. DEAL] is now a Republican. What more bipartisan bill could Members support than the Deal bill?

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York [Ms. VELÁZQUEZ].

(Ms. VELÁZQUEZ asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to the welfare conference agreement. I implore my colleagues on both sides of the isle to reject the mean-spirited provisions in this bill that will allow States to deny SSI and food stamps to immigrants living in the United States legally.

This conference agreement is an insult to millions of hard-working immigrants. it is not only unfair, unjust, discriminatory, and prejudicial—it is unconstitutional. Furthermore, It is a shameful and vicious attempt to single out and penalize immigrants for the wrongs of society.

In the past when the majority of immigrants looked like most of my Republican colleagues—immigration was good. Now that the majority of immigrants look like me—the radicals are pushing for laws that serve to punish those whose only crime is that they came to this country for a better life.

I ask my colleagues have we forgotten that this is a Nation of immigrants? Let's not create laws that will discriminate against people who work hard, pay taxes, and serve in the military. Vote against this shameful welfare conference agreement.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the most distinguished gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. MCCRERY], a valuable member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. MCCRERY. First of all, Mr. Speaker, let me point out that this conference report represents a compromise on the issue of SSI for children. Those of us who wanted to replace cash benefits with services to disabled children agreed to continue cash. Although I think that decision is a mistake, I believe this bill makes other badly needed changes to a badly flawed program, so I support the compromise.

But some defenders of the status quo, having lost the issue of cash to cry about, now complain that fewer children will qualify for SSI as a result of this bill. That is true. Here's why. As recently as 1989, the number of children on SSI was 300,000; today, that number is 900,000. Clearly, something is wrong with a program that triples in 6 years.

Under this bill, caseloads would decline because, after months of hearings and expert testimony, Republicans and some Democrats are acting to bring some common sense back to this program. Our bill ends the IFA and maladaptive behavior standards that allow parents to receive more than $5,000 per child in annual benefits—sometime called crazy checks—because their children exhibited age-inappropriate behavior.

My Democrat colleagues should be familiar with this policy, because they all supported it as part of the House Democratic welfare substitute just last spring. Every Democrat voted for a bill that would cut the same number of children from the SSI rolls as this conference report. According to CBO, the Democrat bill would "trim approximately 20 to 25 percent of children from the SSI rolls."

Yes, just a few months ago, every Democrat in this House voted, rightly, to restrict eligibility for a welfare program gone wild. Yet today, in an effort to make cheap political points, some of them conveniently change their minds. Well, it won't work—what was sound policy then is sound policy now. The SSI provisions of this bill should be a good reason to vote for the conference report.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. MALONEY].

(Mrs. MALONEY asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. LEVIN] who serves on the Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Committee on Ways and Means and who has really been in the forefront of welfare reform for many years and one who has articulated the issue very well for the children of this Nation.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his kind words. Unfortunately, this is not a historic day. It is a wasted opportunity. Instead of a bipartisan bill that the President can sign, this is an extreme bill that my colleagues have given the President no choice but to vote.

The House Democratic bill that we presented a number of months ago aimed at putting people on welfare into work. It had time limits. It had flexibility for the Governors. It had resources to make that program work. The gentleman from Georgia [Mr. DEAL] comes here and that key part is out of the bill and he defends his action.

The CBO has said very clearly that in the year 2002 the bill is $7 billion-plus short on getting people to work within the participation rates, child care, and the work requirements.

I want to say something, though. My colleagues are not only weak on work, but they punish kids. I want to say this to my colleagues very directly, because what was said a few minutes ago is simply wrong. The Republican Senators who signed that letter saying that they had deep concern pointed out their 58 billion in cuts have nothing to do with AFDC and getting parents into work as they should. It cuts food stamps mostly for kids. It cuts protective services like foster care for children. It cuts Medicaid, the link between welfare and health care.

For people to get off of welfare, they need a year's transition with Medicaid and you eliminate it. You also tamper with SSI. These are kids with cerebral palsy, Downs syndrome, muscular dystrophy, cystic fibrosis.

We did eliminate in our bill, it was not this many, 330,000, a smaller number who do not deserve to be on the rolls. We need reform, but you cut by 25 percent payment, yes, and you do, for kids with cystic fibrosis, cerebral palsy, Downs syndrome.

Mr. MCCRRERY. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. LEVIN. I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana.

Mr. MCCRERY. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman is simply wrong. In fact, the CBO, I have the statement right here in front of me that the Deal bill that was voted for cuts from the roles the same number of children.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, there was no 25-percent cut for these severely handicapped children, period. And what Members have done is grab $4 billion from severely handicapped kids, from low income, in order to pay for a tax cut. That is a crying shame and that is why we are going to vote ''no'' on this welfare bill.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. FRANKS].

(Mr. FRANKS of Connecticut asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FRANKS of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4. Since my election to Congress in 1990, I have fought hard to address a system that to me is akin to one of the most oppressive systems and periods in our country's history, slavery. There are strong similarities between our current welfare system and slavery. Like slavery, welfare recipients feel trapped, have low hope, depend on the system as well. The welfare recipients receive food, shelter and health care, and so did slaves.

There are of course some differences. Slaves were black; most welfare recipients are white, though a disproportionate number of blacks are on welfare. Slaves worked but were not paid. Welfare recipients do not work but they are paid. Both practices are wrong. One system would kill you with pain via the whip, while the other system would kill you with kindness. Both have the same end result, they control people's lives.

Both systems divide the family, a key element of perpetuating the system. Slave owners sold off slaves with little regard to the family while in today's welfare system we encourage the flight of the male. We encourage the divided family. We ended slavery, Mr. Speaker. The least we can do is reform welfare. There is a better way.

I am also pleased that the electronic benefits transfer, the debit card system, has been included in this bill for the disbursement of AFDC and food stamps. I introduced this bill, the debit card, in 1993.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. FIELDS].

(Mr. FIELDS of Louisiana asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FIELDS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this bill.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. BENTSEN].

(Mr. BENTSEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of real welfare reform as contained in the Deal substitute and the coalition budget and in opposition to this conference report.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of real welfare reform as provided in the Deal substitute and contained in the coalition's balanced budget and in opposition to the conference report for H.R. 4, the Personal Responsibility Act. This bill is the wrong answer to the critical challenge of reforming our welfare system to encourage more personal responsibility and to require welfare recipients to work. This bill is weak on work and tough on children, and it fails to keep up with the needs of fast-growing States such as Texas.

Let there be no mistake about it. I strongly support reforming welfare to emphasize work. Earlier this year, I voted for the Deal-Stenholm welfare reform bill, which includes a tough work requirement and provides resources to help people on welfare find and keep jobs. I voted for it again with the coalition's balanced budget reconciliation bill. The Deal-Stenholm plan requires each person on welfare to immediately develop a self-sufficiency plan that includes job searching, job training, or education. It would cut off benefits to individuals who refuse to work or accept a job. But it also provides a necessary resources, including child care, job training, health care, and nutrition, that make it possible for parents to work without hurting their children and that make sure that work pays more than welfare.

H.R. 4 neither requires nor rewards work. Rather, it punishes children.

This bill includes no work requirement whatsoever. It rewards states that reduce their welfare rolls, but the reward is the same regardless of whether recipients end up homeless on the streets or in good jobs and on the road to a better life. In fact, the former is much more likely than the latter under this bill because it falls woefully short in meeting child care, health care, and other needs. In fact, this bill falls $14 billion short of meeting these needs compared to the Senate bill approved earlier this year, which itself was barely adequate at best.

The problems in this bill are exacerbated by the Republican proposal to cut the earned income tax credit by $32 billion over the next 7 years. This cut in the EITC amounts to a tax increase for 12.6 million working families with 14.5 million children. What kind of a message do we send to these families when we tell them that if they work hard, they will be penalized with a tax increase and reduced health care, child care, and nutritional assistance? It certainly isn't a message that we value work.

It is the children that will suffer, through no faulty of their own. For example, this conference report severs the link between welfare and Medicaid eligibility. In Texas alone, 321,419 parents and children would lose their health coverage. These children and families will lose guaranteed health coverage regardless of any other reforms made in Medicaid. Without Medicaid coverage, sick children will go without even the most basic health care.

This bill is especially bad for fast-growing States such as Texas. The proposal to block grant will welfare benefits would cost Texas $1 billion over 7-years. Texas is a State with higher than average population growth. Block grants are fixed amounts of money that are not adjusted for either population growth or recessions. Thus block grants will not keep up with Texas' needs. And Texas certainly would not have sufficient resources to help our most vulnerable families, therefore creating an unfunded mandate which this HOUSE is on record opposing.

In the final analysis, H.R. 4 is the wrong answer to a critical problem. The President has vowed to veto this bill in its current form. I hope that once the President vetoes this bill, we can work together on a bipartisan basis to reform our welfare system. The Deal-Stenholm

plan is a constructive compromise that encourages and rewards work while protecting our children. This is the common-sense approach we need to truly reform welfare.

Mr. FORD Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California [Mr. FARR].

(Mr. FARR asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this bill.

Mr. Speaker, in Dr. Seuss' beloved story, the Grinch stole Christmas from the children in Whooville because he was mean-spirited. While the Grinch is a fairy tale and has a happy ending, it is tragic that the welfare reform conference report before us today is not.

While every Member of this institution agrees with me that the welfare system is broken and must be fixed, it is unconscionable to me that the Republicans can demonstrate such mean-spiritedness by proposing a welfare reform bill that will plunge innocent children into poverty.

Every President since FDR has preserved the minimum national guarantee of income assistance for poor children. What the Republican conference report does is steal the basic guarantees of help for poor, hungry, ill, abused, and neglected children much like the Ginch who stole Christmas from Whoolville.

At the same time the Republicans can eliminate the safety net for children, they continue to insist on a $245 billion tax cut for the wealthy.

Let me tell you what would happen by the year 2002 if the $245 billion were allotted to low-income children instead: enroll another 1.5 million children in Head Start, cost: $42.68 billion; expand child care for working parents, cost: $42.20 billion; provide health insurance to 10 million children who currently have no health insurance, cost: $90.80 billion; provide after-school programs, cost: $4.95 billion; and raise 3.65 million children out of poverty, cost: $70.67 billion.

This is true welfare reform—if we allocate $70 billion to give jobless parents part-time jobs and provide families with child care, wage supplements, and direct cash assistance, we would truly fulfill the spirit of Christmas for millions and millions of needy children.

This is a Grinchie conference report and I urge its defeat.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to be gentlewoman from the district of Columbia [Ms. NORTON].

(Mr. NORTON asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, there is no greater disappointment this session than this bill. It fails to meet the two mandates the American people gave us when we began this exercise across all race and class lines: put people on welfare to work; do no harm to children.

Instead of providing the means to work, we provide an artificial percentage who must work which we know will not be met, 50 percent by the year 2002. The bill betrays the mandate of no harm to children because it removes the entitlement without replacing it with any form of safety net. Ending the entitlement and the safety net will not reduce the number of desperately needy children who need some means of support. Instead of saving children, we put their needy parents in competition with one another. The working poor and the welfare poor will compete with one another for child care because we eliminate much of what we said we would give in child care. If we believe in keeping with the priorities our own constituents set for us across race and class lines at the beginning of this exercise, we must vote down this conference report.

Mr. SHAW Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Texas [Mr. SMITH], a member of the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, one of the most important sections in the Personal Responsibility Act stops giving welfare benefits to illegal aliens and encourages legal immigrants to become self-reliant. Our Nation simply cannot continue to allow noncitizens to take limited welfare resources while ignoring our own citizens.

Many immigrants come to America for economic opportunity. Others, though, come to exploit our Government assistance programs. For example, the number of immigrants applying for supplemental security income has increased 580 percent over the last 12 years. Those who agree to financially sponsor immigrants repeatedly fail to honor their obligations.

The provisions in the Personal Responsibility Act that apply to noncitizens are estimated to save American taxpayers $16 billion, but welfare reform is as much a behavioral issue as a budgetary one. The real debate in welfare reform is not over 16 billion, it is over the fact that welfare destroys work incentives, encourages the breakdown of the family and results in years of dependency.

Mr. Speaker, all the President needs to do to keep his word to the American people to reform welfare is to sign this bill.

□ 1415

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. RUSH].

(Mr. RUSH asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this bill.

We have sent troops to Bosnia to protect people who cannot protect themselves. They were killed and slaughtered because another group felt that the region in which they lived needed to be cleansed. I mention this because, the provisions in this bill bring to mind the tragedy in Bosnia. The motivation behind these provisions which deny Medicaid, social services, and welfare for assistance to legal immigrants, children, and the disabled reeks of all sorts of machinations.

I am concerned that the Republican majority feels that this Nation needs to be cleansed of those who do not speak English as their native language, those who are poor, those who are disabled, those who are sick, and those who dare to ask for a helping hand, whatever the reason might be.

Mr. Speaker, this bill sounds like, smells like and is an elitist manifesto. Some may characterize this bill as immoral, but I feel that would not be accurate. This bill goes further—it is amoral—totally devoid and lacking of consideration of laws of human civility.

We must change the welfare system, however, it must not be done without compassion and sensibility. This bill will only harm those who are already in need.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York [Mr. NADLER].

(Mr. NADLER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this terrible bill.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the Republican welfare reform conference report being considered today on the House floor.

This bill is a clear assault on America's children, and on America's future. It would cut $48.4 billion from vital family survival programs, denying benefits to millions of children who are in desperate need.

The welfare reform bill rips apart the safety net that so many children and families have relied on to help them stay afloat during desperate times. The Draconian cuts to essential services for low-income children, for families, and for elderly and disabled people is a clear example of the mean and uncaring spirit which has engulfed this Congress.

Mr. Speaker, the magnitude of the cuts to these programs are unprecedented in U.S. history. This bill takes away the guaranty of emergency assistance for the very poor. It reduces drastically the funding for child protection programs needed to remove children from unsafe homes, and to place them in appropriate settings, such as foster care and adoption. Under this legislation, families on AFDC, as well as children receiving foster care and adoption assistance, would no longer be assured of receiving Medicaid as they currently are. Food assistance is reduced to ridiculous levels. The food stamp program is cut nearly $35 billion over 7 years—cutting benefits about 20 percent. Further, this bill reduces Federal supplemental security income benefits for large groups of disabled low-income children and also to older Americans. This bill also reduces funding for work programs which are key to making people personally responsible for themselves and their families.

As a result of these reductions, the legislation would increase poverty dramatically among children. An Office of Management and Budget analysis found that this conference agreement would add 1.5 million children to the ranks of the poor. This study also found that the conference agreement would increase the depth of child poverty by one-third—making large numbers of children who already are poor poorer. This too is unprecedented in our Nation's history.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is immoral and counter to the so-called family values which the Republicans constantly tout as necessary to a productive society. How this legislation will help to foster family values and personal responsibility baffles me. This legislation will put more families and children out on the streets; make more families and children go hungry; and will take away all of the basic survival needs and opportunities which those less fortunate need to be productive and contributing

citizens. Don't let the Republicans fool you into believing that this bill is about reforming the welfare system, because if it were they would focus more on job and education opportunities for families with children while maintaining an adequate living standard for those in need, allowing them to be distinct contributors.

This bill callously steals the little bit of hope that those in need have left to rise up against the odds. Clearly, it is a vehicle to keep the poor and disadvantaged down at the benefit of the wealthy status quo.

In this bill, the Republicans destroy hope for personal advancement among this Nation's disadvantaged and poor—those who have not been so fortunate to have been born into economically stable families.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote against this very damaging bill.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. LEWIS], the distinguished Democratic leader.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of the Gingrich Christmas, Republicans are giving American children an early Christmas surprise.

During this season, the season of giving, the Republicans have instead taken—taken from our Nation's poor children. They are stealing the hopes and dreams of millions of children who have little else.

The Republican plan puts a million and a half children into poverty. It takes from school lunches and child care. Poor children are no longer guaranteed basic health care.

The Republican proposal destroys the safety net that protects our Nation's children. It is an extreme, mean-spirited and radical proposal—devoid of compassion and feeling.

As your children open their presents Monday morning—as we join our families in love and fellowship—take a moment to remember the children who will do without, the children that this plan will make do with even less.

Merry Christmas—Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Arkansas [Mr. HUTCHINSON].

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, my friends, in the midst of this budget crisis, the crisis of a generation, we are afforded an historic opportunity to transform a flawed welfare system that has been destroying families, eroding hope, and shredding the social fabric of this country for a generation.

If you are for welfare reform today, you have an opportunity, a chance to prove it. No more excuses, no more demagoguery, no more rhetoric about how it is tough on children, no more rhetoric about pulling the safety net and all of the rhetoric about it being cruel and mean.

I do not know, I have lost track of how many times the word cut has been used from the other side. So let us set the record straight. This chart demonstrates it conclusively: Spending in this bill increases, increases, increases, at 4 percent a year. Perhaps more importantly, spending per person in poverty, the individuals whom we are most concerned about, increases to the point that it will be the highest ever in the history of this republic.

I challenge anybody on the other side of the aisle to dispute these facts. Spending goes up in this bill. The safety net is secure. This bill, in fact, has been so tempered in conference that only the most wild-eyed liberal could possibly oppose it. It gives States new, broad authority to design their welfare programs.

You say, well, they might not do it right. And I say they could not possibly do it worse. It has real work requirements. It has a real time cutoff on welfare benefits.

I am from Arkansas. I know President Clinton is an advocate for welfare reform and, I believe in the end he will do right and he will sign this bill. We will have real welfare reform.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I am inserting at this point in the RECORD material expressing opposition to this bill.

ASFSA POSITION ON WELFARE REFORM CONFERENCE REPORT

ASFSA urges the Congress to vote against the welfare reform conference report because in addition to other problems it includes a block grant of school lunch and child nutrition. While the school lunch block grant is limited to seven states, it is a step in the wrong direction. The block grant breaks a fifty year tradition of federal responsibility and commitment to feeding children. (The National School Lunch Act was signed by President Harry Truman on June 4, 1946.)

The National School Lunch Program works, and works very well. There is no reason to experiment, even in seven states, with how to break the federal commitment to feeding children.

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA,
Philadelphia, PA, December 14, 1995.

Hon. RICHARD LUGAR,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR LUGAR: On behalf of the students of Philadelphia's public schools and their parents, I extend heartfelt thanks for your staunch opposition to block grants for school nutrition programs.

The School District of Philadelphia feeds its students over 115,000 lunch and 32,000 breakfast meals each day. Eighty-five percent of these student's household size and family income make them eligible for free meals. To many of our students these meals are the only source of good nutrition that they may receive. Over the past five years we have increased student participation in the lunch program by 57% and by 128% at breakfast. The block grant concept for nutrition programs would have severely impeded our progress in increasing student participation and maintaining current service levels.

It is a recognized fact that nutritious meals improve a student's ability to achieve and contribute to long term wellness. Your principled, non-partisan stand on this issue is a true service to the youth of this country.

Again, thank you.

Sincerely,

THOMAS E. MCGLINCHY,
Director.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California [Mr. BECERRA].

(Mr. BECERRA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

When you ask any American what is reform in welfare, they will tell you, go after the fraud, be tough on the cheats, require work. But if you ask them should we knock 330,000 children who are severely disabled off from any assistance whatsoever and you tell them that for the 650,000 other very severely disabled children who have things like cerebral palsy or Down's syndrome, that should we cut their assistance by 25 percent, will they tell you that is reform? Will they tell your cutting $35 billion out of food stamps that will affect the 14 million children in this country who receive some assistance through food stamps, that that is reform? They will not tell you yes, but they will say you are heading in the wrong direction.

When you tell them that if you abide by the laws and you pay your taxes and you are doing everything this country asks you to, except you are not quite yet a citizen, should you be denied assistance if you should need it? I do not think they will tell you yes. This bill takes $20 billion out of the hide of legal residents to this country, and I think that is wrong.

Let us get some reform. Let us not ravage our children. Let us get something on the table we can vote for. This conference report is not it.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California [Mr. TORRES].

(Mr. TORRES asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this welfare conference report.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the welfare conference report. This report is nothing short of a nightmare. What the Republicans call reform, I call outright abuse.

Welfare reform is about helping families help themselves. It's about presenting opportunity through job training and child care. It's about giving these families a realistic chance at making it on their own.

More importantly, welfare reform begins with the next generation. This conference report ignores this simple fact.

If we want to end welfare as we know it, let's start with our welfare children—all of our welfare children, be they legal residents or not. They did not ask for poverty or hunger, so let's recognize their innocence with reforms that give them a future.

Instead, this Congress is leading our poorest, neediest children to the edge of a cliff and pushing them off.

With cuts in nutritional programs, child care and health care, we are taking away their future. We aren't encouraging the end of welfare, we're cultivating the next generation of recipients.

I ask my colleagues to vote against this report; these children did not create the welfare crises. Don't make them pay for it.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Oregon [Mr. DEFAZIO].

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the conference report.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today, just a few short days before Christmas and during the observance of Hanukkah, to denounce the welfare reform conference report as antifamily, antichildren, and the most dramatic illustration of the cruel agenda of the House Republicans.

In this time of giving and caring, of family togetherness, it is simply unconscionable that we are considering legislation that will ultimately deprive children, the elderly, and low income families in this country of the most basic human needs—food, healthcare, and protection from abuse. What has happened to this country's priorities? Last month, Congress approved a $245 billion tax cut that primarily benefits wealthy Americans and profitable corporations. Just last week Congress passed legislation authorizing $260 billion in defense spending, including funds for more B–2 bombers, at $2 billion each, which the Pentagon does not want. Today the House authorized $28 billion for intelligence operations.

I am unalterably opposed to this irresponsible welfare reform proposal. The plan punishes our country's poor families and children while doing nothing to move them off welfare and into family-wage jobs. The conference report pretends that if we punish the poor, the problem of welfare dependency will somehow go away. The conference report reduces funding for education and job training and provides insufficient funding for child care—the very tools that enable people to leave welfare and become self-sufficient.

In a nation facing unemployment rates of 5.6 percent, this legislation will not prepare welfare recipients for family-wage jobs and self-sufficiency. Instead, it sets an arbitrary time limit of anywhere from 2 to 5 years in which people who have been given no opportunity to succeed are permanently barred from assistance. Welfare needs reform, but we must give individuals real opportunities for success.

The Republican leadership argues that welfare eats up our entire Federal budget. In fact, we spend 1 percent of our total budget on Aid to Families With Dependent Children—$16 billion. That's about the same amount the Republican leadership proposes to spend on foreign aid. By conservative estimates, we will spend about $570 billion over the next 5 years on corporate welfare for large profitable corporations, many of which are foreign owned. In contrast, the welfare reform conference report will cut anywhere between $60 and $80 billion over the next 7 years in a variety of public welfare programs—we don't know exactly how much, because we haven't been able to see the final report.

We do know who will feel the burden of these cuts. It is our Nation's children, Mr. Speaker. In the United States in 1992 children made up 67 percent of all welfare recipients. That year, slightly more than 9 million children received cash assistance from Aid to Families with Dependent Children [AFDC]. It is these children who will face the terrible consequences if this bill is enacted. What will happen to these children if their parents are denied assistance? Will America look more like Calcutta in 7 years? Is that what Americans want.

We have heard that if families are forced off welfare, they will still have access to healthcare and food stamps. However, the conference report eliminates the current guarantee of Medicaid coverage for AFDC recipients, as well as children receiving foster care and adoption assistance. In addition, nearly half of the cuts in this bill come from the Food Stamp Program. Republicans have been assuring us all along that they're maintaining the basic noncash safety net for children of food stamps and Medicaid. Now we see the reality behind the rhetoric. This is a mean-spirited attack on the poor which will increase child hunger and deny children access to health care.

I would like to close with some passages from that cherished Christmas story, ''A Christmas Carol,'' as spoken by the character, Ebenezer Scrooge:

> Are there no prisons, no workhouses? . . . I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help to support these establishments and they cost enough and those who are badly off must go there . . . It is enough for a man to understand his own business and not interfere with other people's.

Sound familiar, Mr. Speaker? You have heard almost identical statements from the Republicans throughout the past year. All ends well in this story of Christmas past and Scrooge mends his ways. I call on my colleagues to follow this example and reject this mean-spirited legislation for the sake of our Nation's children.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from California [Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD].

(Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this bill.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. OLVER].

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, welfare reform is supposed to move people off welfare and reward work, but this bill does neither. It not only shreds the safety net for the truly poor but it hurts working families as well. This bill slashes child care, nutrition, and food stamps for working families. It slashes support for disabled children. It slashes child abuse protections, the very support that keeps working families whole and off of welfare.

Add to this the Gingrich earned income tax credit cuts, and you truly close the door of opportunity for poor working families and their children. That is not reform, Mr. Speaker, it is cruelty.

Mr. Speaker, welfare reform, real welfare reform, is supposed to move people off welfare and reward them for their working.

Last spring, I and every other House Democrats voted for a welfare reform bill which would have done just that. It included tougher work requirements than the Republican plan and State flexibility in improvising welfare policies, while at the same time preserving the safety net for this Nation's poor. It also provided adequate funding for the tools needed to successfully move people to work: education, training, and child care.

The extremist bill we vote on today, H.R. 4, does neither of these things.

It shreds the safety net for the truly poor in this country, ending the 60-year commitment Government has made to the less fortunate.

It ends the guarantee of financial assistance, health care, and child care for poor children. It provides no additional funds for education, literacy, and job training to move and keep people off welfare.

Furthermore, this bill also directly harms the economic well-being of working families.

This bill cuts funding for child nutrition, such as WIC, which provides vital prenatal nutrition for women, and food at day care centers for low-income families. It cuts both child care and food stamps, both of which are essential to struggling, working families.

This legislation also slashes at nonwelfare programs like financial assistance for disabled children and protection for neglected and abused children.

These are the very supports that keep working families whole and off of welfare.

Add to these measures the proposed $30 billion in cuts to the earned income tax credit, which benefits 12 million families with incomes below $30,000, and you truly close the door on opportunity for the working poor.

That's not reform, that's cruelty.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield 50 seconds to our colleague, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. ROSE].

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the time, and I would like to tell my colleagues that at the appropriate time I will offer a motion to recommit. This motion to recommit goes in the direction of what our distinguished colleagues in another body have urged that be done.

I urge my colleagues to take a page out of Santa Claus' book and realize that this is not a time to be cruel to the youngest and the most vulnerable people in our society.

I urge that the motion to recommit, which I will offer at the appropriate time, be adopted by my colleagues.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Florida [Mrs. MEEK].

(Mrs. MEEK of Florida asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I stand to say to the world to, please, revoke this stand by the Republican party against needy immigrants and vote against it.

Mr. Speaker, there are many reasons to oppose this conference report. I'll just talk about one that is very important in the part of the country I represent: discriminating against legal immigrants.

The conference report denies Supplementary Security Income and food stamps to legal immigrants.

The Republican majority is destroying the safety net for thousands of people who are legal residents in the Miami area. These people are hardworking and productive members of society. They pay their taxes. But for reasons beyond their control, some of them may need temporary financial assistance.

Why does the Republican majority discriminate against people who are legal residents? We all know the answer. This discrimination cuts Federal spending by $20 billion. They want to use these funds to give a $245 billion tax cut that is targeted to those earning more than $100,000 a year.

This conference report should be defeated.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the remainder of my time.

I would like to make note of the statement by the President today, share it with my colleagues on the Republican side as well as the Democrats on this side. In a portion of it, he said, ''I am disappointed the Republicans are trying to use the word welfare reform as cover to advance the budget plan that is at odds with America's values. Americans know that welfare reform is not about playing budget politics. It is about moving people from welfare to work,'' and he said, ''I am determined to work with Congress to achieve real bipartisan welfare reform, but if Congress sends me this conference report, I will veto it and insist that they try again.''

I urge the President to veto this bill if it is passed today, this conference report, in this House of Representatives.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MICA].

(Mr. MICA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MICA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this conference report.

Thomas Jefferson said it best in 3 words, "Despondency begets servitude."

Through misguided compassion our welfare system has fostered chaos. We have enslaved two generations. The Federal welfare system has destroyed family structure, work ethic, and any sense of values and smothered opportunity. The Federal welfare system has destroyed hope, discouraged personal responsibility, and cast a dark gloom over the lives of millions of Americans.

Today we offer with this welfare reform bill a glimmer of hope. Today we offer hope for people to help themselves. Today we offer hope to end the cycle of dependency.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the remainder of my time.

Mr. Speaker, we have come down a very, very long road. Before I get into my closing remarks, I want to recognize a staff person who has done an unbelievable job in bringing this along, Dr. Ron Haskins, of the Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Human Resources. Without him, all of us know that without good hard-working staff people, such as Dr. Haskins, we would not be able to formulate legislation such as is before us today.

Mr. Speaker, I think we also, while we are handing out credit today, we have to give credit to the President of the United States for raising the consciousness of the American people about the corruption of the existing welfare system. For it is he that coined the phrase that we shall change welfare as we know it today. It took, however, this Congress to finally move forward with a bill that all of us today should be able to support.

I wish the podium were right in the middle of this floor because this is where it ought to be when we are talking about the future of so many millions of American people who have become welfare dependent. President Roosevelt referred to welfare as a narcotic. It is an addictive narcotic.

Approaching welfare reform, as many of us did some 5½, 6 years ago, never once did we view it as a vindication of the taxpayer. We viewed it as a corrupt system that had sucked people into a way of life from which there was no escape, and we have moved substantially forward.

I want to compliment all of the Members on the Democrat side of the aisle for their vote the last time this came forward, because each and every one of you set aside and said, ''I will not support the existing welfare system.'' Each and every one of you today have not, not one person in this Chamber has gotten up to support this system that is now 60 years old and has enslaved so many of our American people.

Is there one of us that would want to depend upon a 60-year-old car for transportation? But we are asking the poorest among us to live with a system that is 60 years old. Think back 60 years, think of where the place of the woman was 60 years ago and where she is now. Think how the American psyche has changed, think about where minorities have gone in the protection of the law when the law used to work against them, and now it is working with them.

So what has held so many American people back? A welfare system, a welfare system that pays people to stay where they are, not to get married, and not to work. We cannot choose that system.

My colleagues, today we have a choice. On the one side, you can vote for the status quo. On the other side, you can come forward with us and reach out your hand, and I will commit to you as long as I am chairman of the Subcommittee on Human Resources we are going to continue to look at welfare reform. We are going to continue to help the poor. We are going to move this country forward, and we are not going to leave anybody behind this time.

Vote ''yes'' on this most important bill.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, somewhat reluctantly, in opposition to the welfare reform conference report. I do so because my colleagues from the other side of the aisle have left no real choice for those Members who want to make smart and reasonable reforms. Earlier this year, I supported an alternative bill with work requirements, time limits for receiving assistance, and more flexibility for States to make their welfare programs work better.

The bill before us fails any reasonable sense of balance. It singles out the harshest cuts for children, such as denying AFDC cash assistance to 4 million children. This is not right. Neither is it right to out 6 million children from the health care benefits of Medicaid.

As we work to reform welfare, it is important to remember that we do not provide welfare assistance purely for altruistic reasons. We provide financial assistance to those in need because it is in the best interest of our society to do so.

Helping Americans who are experiencing severe financial difficulties get back on their feet, at its most practical level, lowers our crime rate and increases our Nation's ability to compete by strengthening the quality of our work force. At its loftiest level, it increases the quality of many people's lives.

Our goal is to return people to work—enabling them to support their families, and provide for those children, elderly, and disabled who are unable to provide for themselves. For the most part, this requires funding of the basic necessities—health care, child care, and job training. The bill fails to provide to States adequate funding for any of these three.

The bill repeals the current guarantee of Medicaid coverage for AFDC families, thus leaving over 4 million mothers without health care. It also mandates that 50 percent of welfare recipients participate in work programs, yet offers no funding for these programs. This places a $26 billion unfunded mandate on States to operate job training programs, and to care for the children of those enrolled.

In our rush to try to get home for the holidays, I find it sad that our friends on the majority side of the aisle have chosen to mark the spirit of the season by pushing through an excessive level of cuts disproportionately aimed at the most helpless among us. I am told the President will veto this legislation. That is the right choice. Perhaps then we can mark the new year by working in a bipartisan manner to enact smart and reasonable welfare reform.

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this measure, H.R. 4. This is not welfare reform, rather, it is a measure which short changes many essential programs that affect our fellow Americans in need.

In addition to rewriting policy and cutting funding for the Aid to Families with Dependent Children [AFDC] Program, the measure substantially cuts nutrition programs, child care assistance, Supplemental Security Income [SSI], and other emergency assistance programs. Consequently, it undercuts much of the economic safety net for people in need in our Nation.

Major flaws that were inherent in this measure when it left the House persist, and, in some instances, have been compounded. This measure ends the entitlement status of most essential programs for families in need and folds them together. This means that the numbers of families and individuals that actually qualify for assistance with today's policy will no longer be a factor, they will be irrelevant, in determining who gets aid. The policy advanced in H.R. 4 sets reduced allocations of funds that are fixed, regardless of the demographics or need.

Furthermore, this measure relieves the States of a full maintenance of effort, allowing them to provide substantially less resources to meet the needs of their own citizens. While I understand that States and local public officials care about the well-being of their citizens, the shortfall in funding under H.R. 4 will

force them to do more with less, and that willingness to match and maintain the same effort that exists under current policy will be strained. The State and local officials may benefit from flexibility, but it would take a miracle to offset the cuts and exclusions in this bill and also achieve the work requirements set forth in it. This measure contains inadequate support for training and education and does not provide the necessary transitional health care that should be present to support the expected participation in the world of work.

Individuals in our society should be expected to do what they can for themselves. But policies should be careful to differentiate between those who cannot and those who will not. Many of the benefits of a public assistance nature accrue to the welfare of children. Two-thirds of the individuals within the welfare system are children. The harsh policies advanced in this measure affect kids with disabilities under SSI. Funding to aid children with Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, AIDS, muscular dystrophy and cystic fibrosis under SSI would be cut by 25 percent—an estimated 650,000 kids would be affected. An additional 320,000 kids would lose SSI benefits under different changes in the law. Nearly 1 million children would lose under the SSI policy changes of H.R. 4 alone.

Mr. Speaker, one provision on this measure claims big cuts and savings by denying benefits to legal immigrants, noncitizens who pay taxes and contribute to our economy. Such is the case with the Hmong, the natives of Laos who have a concentrated population in Minnesota and in other parts of the Nation. Because they have failed their citizenship test largely based on language difficulties, they would be denied essential and basic public assistance benefits.

Mr. Speaker, this could affect tens of thousands of individuals nationwide and many in my community. Other immigrant groups will also be negatively affected by this provision such as the influx of Soviet jews who are so prominent in our area. I know of no justification or explanation for this policy. Certainly, a more rigorous pursuit of deeming, that is sponsor support, for immigrants is appropriate, but often this is not applicable or practical.

Mr. Speaker, this will translate into unacceptable responsibilities and burdens on families, communities, and States. H.R. 4 is not well-thought-out policy. Its claim to reform masks extreme notions of a welfare mindset that has little relationship to the real world. Spousal support provisions and some of the sensible provisions of this measure are completely eclipsed by the negative, punitive, regressive, and unworkable policy that is palmed off as reform—deformed policy would be a more accurate description. I urge my colleagues to oppose this measure and renew our efforts for real reform so that those dependent can truly achieve an end goal of independence and positive contribution of their talents, for our Nation and our society.

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 4, the Personal Responsibility Act, a bill designed to overhaul our Nation's welfare system. Nine months ago, on March 24, many of my colleagues and I stood before this body and showed our staunch disagreement with the House-passed welfare reform bill by voting against the bill. I wish I could say that, since then, some compassion and reason had overcome our colleagues on the other side, who were conferees on this measure, to reverse some of the mean and devastating cuts made in this legislation. Unfortunately, that was not the case.

Just 1 month ago, on November 14, I joined with 116 of my colleagues in writing to President Clinton to urge him to veto any welfare reform legislation which eliminates a safety net for our Nation's needy children and their families. I appeal to him again to do so with this ill-advised measure which abandons the Federal commitment and safety net that protects America's children.

In fulfilling their Contract With America, our Republican colleagues assured us that we would have a family friendly Congress. They promised us that our children would be protected. It is abundantly clear that our colleagues have reneged on that commitment when we examine the provisions of this bill. H.R. 4 slashes nearly $80 billion over 7 years in welfare programs. This bill guts the AFDC and Medicaid entitlement, cuts into the SSI protections for disabled children, and drastically cuts food stamps and child nutrition programs.

Mr. Speaker, I find these reductions in quality of life programs appalling. Although they claim to be so concerned about what the future holds for our Nation's children, how can my Republican colleagues support a bill that cuts $3.3 billion from funding for child care for low-income families? How can they stand by a bill that slashes more than $3 billion in funding for meals to children in child care centers and homes? How can they support a bill that would end Medicaid coverage for AFDC recipients, leaving many low-income families with no health care coverage? As if that were not devastating enough, this bill would cut nearly $35 billion over 7 years from the Food Stamp Program and $5.7 billion in the Child Nutrition Program.

H.R. 4 sends a signal to the rest of the world that the United States of America, a world leader, places a very low priority on those individuals who have very little. This bill unfairly punishes children and their families simply because they are poor. In Cuyahoga County, we have a 20-percent poverty rate in a county of 1.4 million people. In the city of Cleveland, it is an alarming 42 percent. Throughout the county, more than 228,000 people receive food stamps. Further, more than 137,000 individuals must rely on Aid to Families With Dependent Children. Many of these individuals constitute America's working poor. This punitive measure will undoubtedly endanger their health and well-being.

Mr. Speaker, I can understand and support a balanced and rational approach to addressing the reform of our Nation's welfare system. But I cannot and will not support this legislation which would shatter the lives of millions of our Nation's poor. The pledge to end welfare as we now know it is not a mandate to act irresponsibly and without compassion and destroy the lives of people, who, through no fault of their own, are in need of assistance. On behalf of America's children and the poor, I urge my colleagues to vote against H.R. 4.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the conference report on welfare reform. The destruction of entitlements. That is the goal of the Republican majority. But only the means-tested Aid to Families with Dependent Children [AFDC] entitlement is being wiped out by these high technology barbarians. Rich farmers and agricultural businesses will still retain their entitlement to farm subsidies. Entitlements to homeowners and business owners for flood relief, hurricane relief, and earthquake relief will remain in place. But families and children who experience economic disaster, the neediest among us will be denied Government assistance.

There are many reasons to vote against this phony reform package. But the single most important reason is that it sets a precedent by ending a means-tested entitlement. A beachhead is established by the barbarians. The next target is the means-tested Medicaid entitlement. In this bill the automatic right to Medicaid presently available to all AFDC recipients is eliminated. In the reconciliation bill of the majority, the means-tested Medicaid entitlement is eliminated totally.

This Christmas 1995 is not a Merry Christmas. Millions of Tiny Tims will suffer and die in the years to come as a result of the overwhelming meaness of the House Republican majority.

Mr. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, this has been an extremely partisan Congress—but this is one area where Democrats and Republicans agree. Welfare needs reform.

But the conference report we're considering today would make a bad system much worse.

The bill would worsen poverty and hunger for innocent children by making deep cuts in benefits especially during economic downturns.

It would do far too little to empower welfare recipients to rejoin the work force with education and training.

It would scale back the very child care funding that would liberate welfare recipients to go to work.

This plan is punitive, irresponsible, and cruel to children.

For example, the 25 percent reduction in SSI benefits will effect aid to children with cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, muscular dystrophy, cystic fibrosis, and other health concerns.

The $32 billion in food stamp cuts will force many working poor, elderly and disabled to go hungry.

The block granting of child protection services and oversight will force more children to stay in abusive and unsafe homes.

This is not welfare reform.

Already millions of children lack health care insurance. Under this agreement, up to 2 million more children could be added to the roles because they would lose Medicaid coverage.

Clearly, welfare needs reform.

Welfare reform should focus on providing real jobs and moving recipients into those jobs. Yet all the best work incentives have been stripped from the bill.

This conference agreement is harsh, mean-spirited, and cruel.

Although, we live in the richest society in human history, this House cannot find within its heart or its wallet, the will to make sure the no American child goes hungry.

For this Christmas season, lets not be Scrooge to the poor and disabled, Vote ''no'' on the agreement.

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the conference agreement on H.R. 4, the so-called Personal Responsibility Act.

It has long been clear that our welfare system is failing the people it is meant to help. But the Personal Responsibility Act will make

the situation of the poor much worse, not better.

The main reason Congress has been slow to face welfare reform in the past is that everyone knows it takes more spending, not less, to help poor mothers get and keep jobs and escape poverty—they need education, training, job search assistance, day care for their children, and jobs.

But this conference agreement saves money, cutting programs that sustain our neediest families at the same time it cuts the programs that might give them a hand up. And why? To give tax breaks to big corporations and the wealthy.

And what would this conference agreement do to our children? First off, it slashes the safety net for poor children and their families. It removes the entitlement—the guarantee that some modest assistance will be there for those families whose desperate circumstances make them eligible. If Federal funds run out in a recession, what recourse will these wretched families have?

Then, although neither House nor Senate voted for this, the agreement repeals the current eligibility link between AFDC and Medicaid. It throws health care onto the list of necessities families must choose among when they cannot pay for all.

The agreement risks increasing the number of babies born too small to thrive. It punishes the neediest children, whose parents' conduct we don't approve of. It leaves neglected and abused children in grave danger for lack of child protection resources. It cuts benefits to hundreds of thousands of poor children disabled by Down syndrome, cystic fibrosis, AIDS, and the like. It puts even healthy children's nutrition at risk, threatening their ability to learn and grow into healthy adults and productive participants in our economy.

The conference agreement attempts to force more mothers into the work force but shortchanges funding for both work programs and child care. States will be forced to choose between funding child care for welfare recipients in work programs and child care for the working poor. Imagine. One welfare family moves into a work program with child care, and a working poor family loses its child care and falls onto welfare. Talk about a vicious cycle.

Mr. Speaker, the conference agreement's immigrant provisions are unfair and mean-spirited. We know immigrants do not come here for public assistance; they come to join family members and to make a better life for their children. The work, they pay taxes, they participate in community life, and they play by the rules. Why should they be denied assistance by this bill? It is certainly not fair to the immigrants or to their families and sponsors. The only possible reason is to save money.

If this applied only to future immigrants, who would know the rules before they sought to immigrate, I would disagree with the policy but it would be fairer. But this conference agreement cuts off people who are already here and who face long backlogs when they try to naturalize. Again, this makes sense only as a means of saving money to offset tax breaks for the rich.

Mr. Speaker, the Republicans elected in November 1994 never told voters that they intended to bring pain to the poor children of our country. Yet, these mean-spirited Republicans continue to come up with new ways to hurt helpless little children, who are least able to fight back. Are children a special interest group Republicans want to muzzle, defund, do away with?

This time, in the middle of this season of family holidays, they have gone too far and the American people are aware of the all-out assault on children. The Republicans are not going to be able to hide their attacks on our children. The voices of the American people are being heard. Do not hurt the children.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is only one part of a Republican assault on ordinary Americans that also includes the reconciliation bill and the appropriations bills. Poor families, low- and moderate-income working families, middle-income families are all being made to pay and pay again, so the richest and most powerful corporations and individuals can receive large and unnecessary tax breaks.

Mr. Speaker, this is just wrong. I urge every Member to oppose this conference agreement.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the conference report on welfare reform which disregards the health and welfare of children, the elderly and victims of domestic violence. Amazingly, at a time when Republicans claim to be pro-family this conference report denies innocent poor children health care and food. And while Republicans purport to be pro-work they offer us legislation which provides no funding whatsoever for job creation.

As ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, I also strongly oppose the conference report provisions dealing with immigration matters. These issues clearly fall within the purview of the Judiciary Committee and should be dealt with in the context of the immigration bill, not welfare legislation.

The conference report imposes harsh restrictions on legal immigrants by barring them from the Food Stamp Programs and SSI programs until they become citizens. Those denied benefits would include legal immigrants who have no sponsors to help support them, those who have paid taxes for many years, and poor immigrant families with children.

The conference report also changes the definition of illegal immigrants. Under this definition individuals who have temporary protective status and are in the United States legally, would be barred from receiving any public assistance. This means that individuals who have been given permission to stay in this country by the INS would be denied assistance. This is mean-spirited immigration bashing and has no place in a bill being considered by this body.

The members know full well the administration will veto this bill. What we have is more partisan grandstanding by the majority, rather than a good-faith effort to genuinely reform and improve the Nations' welfare system.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this conference report and to send this bill back to conference.

Mr. POSHARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the conference report on welfare reform.

In our debate today, we will universally agree on the need to reform the system. However, the question is not whether to reform but how to reform the system, to be more efficient with tax dollars and more effective in caring for children and moving adults into the workforce.

I supported what was known as the Deal bill earlier this year because of its more acceptable approach to a very difficult problem. The bill before us today is unacceptable in a number of key instances:

The bill lacks categorical Medicaid coverage for low-income families with children on cash assistance as well as the aged, blind, and disabled. This could result in millions of Americans losing their guarantee of Medicaid coverage.

The optional block grant approach for nutrition and feeding programs puts millions of children at risk of losing access to healthy meals.

This bill does not fund the work activities and child care provisions mandated in the legislation.

The bill Democrats supported earlier this year was much better in terms of moving people from welfare to work, eliminating abuses in the SSI program, making sure that abused and neglected children will receive foster care and adoption services, and fundamentally changing the welfare system.

This bill is tough on children and families in ways it need not be. I oppose the bill and urge a presidential veto so that we may reach a more bipartisan solution to this very critical challenge.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to strongly support H.R. 4, the welfare reform conference report. I believe this legislation is a critical first step in overhauling our bloated and destructive welfare system. The current welfare system has failed the people it was created to help and worse—it has created an unfortunate cycle of dependency. The American taxpayer can no longer afford to foot the bill for people unwilling to accept responsibility for themselves.

Congress has no intention of turning its back on the most needy in society. Instead, we want to offer a new approach to welfare that gives recipients a hand up—not a hand out. By implementing strict work requirements, emphasizing personal responsibility, and returning power to the States, we will not only provide great benefits to society and taxpayers, but most importantly, to welfare recipients themselves.

The most important change Congress can make in reforming our welfare system is to return power to the States and local communities. This legislation does just that by reducing the amount of control over welfare programs here in Washington, DC, and restoring authority and responsibility to where it belongs—to the people.

H.R. 4 was designed after working with Governors to address their concerns of unnecessary Federal regulation and micromanaged bureaucratic programs. States have proven to be more successful and innovative than the Federal Government in fixing our failed welfare system. I want to give States and local communities the opportunity to experiment, not shackle them with excessive regulations and costly paperwork. It is at the State and local level where welfare program managers deal with welfare recipients—and that is where decisions should be made. And in order for this to happen, states need flexibility.

This legislation will let the people know we have heard their cry for welfare reform. We have listened to welfare recipients and provided them opportunities to get off welfare and into work. We have listened to the taxpayers and are watching out for their hard-earned tax dollars. And, we have listened to the Governors and given them the flexibility they need to truly end welfare as we know it.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support welfare reform—but we must not implement policies that hurt children. I am deeply disappointed that the final conference report did not incorporate more of the provisions that were included in the House substitute bill sponsored by Representative DEAL.

Kids do not have the life choices that parents and other adults do. Kids are not responsibile for our flawed welfare system and kids should not bear the brunt of the impact of this welfare reform package.

The welfare reform bill on the floor today fails in two areas I believe are critical in welfare reform: work and protecting children.

Welfare must become focused on work. Everyone needs to understand that public assistance is a temporary arrangement while steps are taken to obtain employment and independence.

I favor a work requirement which places upon welfare recipients the expectation that they find work or begin the training necessary to allow them to work. Those who are not willing to make this commitment should not be eligible for benefits.

While H.R. 4 does require recipients to work, the bill does not provide adequate funding for job training and child care. Job training is crucial in placing parents into jobs that will lift them out of poverty and keep them out of poverty. The bill lacks adequate child care that must be available to parents and the bill does not meet the needs of those who must work. It simple does not provide the necessary resources to move from welfare to work.

The second clear principle of welfare reform is a cautionary one: Changes must not hurt the young children. Not even the most irate constituent has suggested that the kids of welfare recipients deserve to be punished or can simply be forgotten. It's not the kids' fault. Unfortunately, the proposals in this bill will hurt millions of children.

To begin, H.R. 4 significantly reduces funding for food stamps and other child nutrition programs. These reductions will have a profound consequences for the nutrition, health, and well-being of children. The optional food stamp block grant in the bill would weaken the national nutrition safety net and eliminate the program's ability to expand in times of recessions and guarantee displaced workers and their families a minimum level of nutrition. These changes will jeopardize the long-term health of America's children.

Second, the child protections programs are lumped into block grants, and abused and neglected children lose their entitlement to protection. Instead, basic emergency services would be forced to compete for limited dollars with other less critical programs. When we all can recite story after story of how the system has failed abused and neglected children, now is not the time to weaken these programs.

Protecting children from abuse has nothing to do with welfare reform and the minuscule savings as a result of block granting these programs does not warrant the inherent risk that thousands of kids will be facing.

While these block grants significantly limit funding for child protections, they would also limit funding for adoptions services. The result would be a significant reduction in adoptions throughout this country, denying thousands of children safe, permanent and loving families. In particular, special needs and medically fragile children will disproportionately suffer.

As an adoptive parent, I believe I can speak to the importance of encouraging our communities to find permanent loving homes for all children in need—especially those who might languish in the foster care system.

While the bill would maintain the adoption subsidy as an open ended entitlement, this is not enough. The subsidy which helps place special needs and medically fragile children will not be worth much if adoption staff is not available and well-trained to place children in appropriate homes.

As more children enter the child protection system and are in need of adoptive homes, a block grant will prevent many of them from getting what they need and deserve—a family of their own. Most children affected have special needs: they suffered abuse and neglect, they are older, they are prenatally drug exposed or suffer from severe medical needs like cerebral palsy or are in need of a respirator.

The churches throughout our Nation help find adoptive homes for these children through an innovative program called One Church-One Child and as Rev. Wayne Thompson, the national president explained to me yesterday, their work will be severely impeded if there are not sufficient adoption staff to assist in this crusade.

Let us not penalize our children. They deserve what we all hope for our own children—a safe and loving home, full of support to allow them to become independent and productive citizens. Because of the drastic cuts and changes made in these programs, I can not support the final version of H.R. 4.

Mr. SKAGGS. Mr. Speaker, I oppose this conference report. It has many serious shortcomings, most of which have been discussed by other Members. I won't repeat those criticisms.

Instead, I would like to highlight a little noticed section in the bill, section 112. Section 112 would require any organization described in section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code receiving any funds under the act or amendments made by the act to make a confession as part of any public communication intended to affect the debate on public issue. That confession would have to state:

> This was prepared and paid for by an organization that accepts taxpayer dollars.

If a nonprofit group violates this regulation, it will be rendered ineligible, apparently forever, to receive any funds under the act, or the amendments to it.

Mr. Speaker, this is just another in a long line of assaults by the new Republican majority on the first amendment rights of Americans who express views on public policy issues through the organizations they join or support. This year the new majority has attempted to restrict free speech in America by trying to attach various provisions to regulate or suppress political expression to two appropriations bills, a continuing resolution short-term funding measure, the lobbying reform bill, and now the welfare reform bill.

While this provision, section 112, is not as far-reaching as some of the previous Republican efforts, it is equally misguided. As I understand section 112, if the YMCA or some other group receiving funds to provide child care, or a veterans group receiving funds to provide job training, issues a press release or published an op-ed piece designed to influence the public debate on any Federal, State, or local government issue fails to include the required disclaimer, it will be ineligible to continue its work on programs funded under the act or amendments made by the Act.

Mr. Speaker, the communications, that would be regulated under section 112 need not have anything to with any program or policy associated with this act; they need not have anything to do with any program or policy of the Federal Government at all.

Mr. Speaker, one such regulated communication regarding any government policy that inadvertently goes not without the confession statement and a child care or job training provider would be cut off, presumably forever, from any participation in the national effort to reform this Nation's welfare assistance system.

This is sheer idiocy—both practically, and constitutionally. Section 112 unfairly discriminates against nonprofit groups and creates another unnecessary regulation that will, if anything, impede the effort to provide the services necessary to help Americans move from welfare to work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. FIELDS of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to state my opposition to the GOP welfare reform conference report on which we are about to vote. I am appalled at the way we have addressed welfare reform without consideration for the health and well-being of our children.

Welfare reform should be about getting people off welfare and into jobs.

Welfare reform should not be about punishing our children for the mistakes and misfortunes of their parents.

Welfare reform is not about mothers.

It is about children and making sure they do not go hungry. It is about helping the less fortunate.

Mr. Chairman, I though you would want to know it is estimated in the March 5, 1995, Parade magazine cover story: ''Who are Americans in Need?'' that over 5 million children already go hungry each month. This story further reported that 24 percent of our children live in poverty and that almost 46 percent of American children who are hungry live in one-wage-earner households.

This welfare reform conference report should not be about allowing children to go hungry if their mother is under 18 years of age.

This welfare reform conference report should not be about telling a child that his mother cannot receive money to feed, cloth, or house him because he was born while his mother was already on welfare.

This welfare reform conference report should not be about denying benefits to children if their parents don't have a job after 2 years, especially if we are not going to provide desperately needed job training.

How can we reform welfare when we intend to deny 46,000 Louisiana children benefits because the were born to current welfare recipients?

How can we talk about reforming welfare when we are proposing to deny 100,000 Louisiana children benefits because their parents have been on welfare for more than 5 years?

How can we reform welfare when we expect our children to care for themselves while we mandate their parents must work? This bill decreases child care services for 400,000 Louisiana children, but simultaneously requires their parents to work in order to receive benefits.

We cannot afford to let our children go unsupervised. In today's society our children need all the care they can get. Yet, this plan denies them that care.

It is an absolute shame that today we seek to punish mothers and fathers by punishing their children.

Welfare reform must not be about taking food out of the mouths of our children. Capping funds for recipients and offering bonuses to States for reaching quotas will only lower the quality of life for our children.

With this welfare reform conference report our children are hit from every angle. The first hit comes at home and the second comes in their schools. Capping the amount of money our school lunch programs receive is going to jeopardize the health of our next generation.

How many children are we going to let go hungry and unsupervised before we realize welfare reform is not about forcing children to suffer? When is this body going to realize welfare reform is about assisting the less fortunate families in our communities in their quest to become productive members of our society?

I urge my fellow Members to vote ''no'' on the welfare reform conference report before us today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak out against a great injustice—an injustice that is being committed against our nation's children—defenseless, nonvoting, children. I am referring of course to the Republican welfare conference agreement to H.R. 4, The Personal Responsibility Act. I do this because I have already voted for welfare reform sponsored by the Democrats that was strong on work, strong on children, strong on providing a safety net, and strong on personal responsibility.

We speak so often in this House about family values and protecting children. At the same time however, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, have presented a welfare reform bill that will effectively eliminate the Federal guarantee of assistance for poor children in this country for the first time in 60 years and will push at least 1.2 million more children into poverty, without the entitlement safety net that keeps a roof over their head and meager food on the table. In addition, at least one-third of children who are already poor would fall deeper into poverty under the Republican plan.

This agreement is antifamily and antichild. It calls for unprecedented cuts in programs serving children and would remove the basic protections for hungry, abused, disabled, and poor children while using the savings to offset tax breaks for wealthy individuals and corporations.

The Republican plan would leave millions of American children without health coverage and would eliminate transitional Medicaid benefits for parents and their children as they move from welfare to work.

The agreement cuts $35 billion from the Food Stamp Program and allows States to block grant the program. It also includes a cap that cuts food stamp benefits across the board if poverty deepens. In my States, Texas, the State leadership has said this Republican plan will not work in some very important areas—the incentive to work.

The Republican plan repeals the protections that guarantee an abused or neglected child a safe, clean foster care facility and services that can promptly resolve a family crisis. Furthermore, the Republican plan makes no adjustments in funding if the number of abused children increases—or decreases—in a State. This means abused children may be left in danger.

Under the Republican plan, 330,000 low-income, disabled children—who would qualify for benefits under current law—would be denied SSI benefits. For most children who remain eligible for SSI, benefits would be cut by 25 percent—more than 650,000 children. This includes children with disabilities such as cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, muscular dystrophy, cystic fibrosis, and AIDS. These children would lose, on average $1,374 per year, with their benefits falling to 55 percent of the poverty line for one person.

The conference agreement fails to provide adequate resources for work programs and child care which are critical to effectuate a transition from welfare to work. The conference agreement significantly increases the need for child care while reducing the resources for child care services as well as the funds available to States to improve the quality of care.

This strategy of welfare-to-work, is doomed to fail. Mandatory welfare-to-work programs can get parents off welfare and into jobs, but only if the program is well designed and is given the resources to be successful. The GOP plan is punitive and wrong-headed. It will not put people to work, it will put them on the street. Any restructuring of the welfare system must move people away from dependency toward self-sufficiency. Facilitating the transition off welfare requires job training, guaranteed child care, and health insurance at an affordable price.

We cannot expect to reduce our welfare rolls if we do not provide the women of this Nation the opportunity to better themselves and their families through job training and education, if we do not provide them with good quality child care and most importantly if we do not provide them with a job.

Together, welfare programs make-up the safety net that poor children and their families rely on in times of need. We must not allow the safety not to be shredded. We must keep our promises to the children of this Nation. We must ensure that in times of need they receive the health care, food, and general services they need to survive. I urge my colleagues in this the ''Season of Giving,'' to oppose this dangerous and heartless legislation. Let us formulate a welfare plan that will last—job training, children, and real work incentives.

Mrs. COLLINS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, the spirit of Christmas may be alive and well in the rest of America but it is clearly nonexistent here in the Nation's Capital. Today, 4 days before Christmas, the House is about to pass H.R. 4, the Personal Responsibility Act, which means a colder, bleaker, and meaner holiday season and New Year for children across the country and poor Americans who are struggling to survive.

Proponents of this bill will stand up today, praise each other and congratulate themselves for reforming the welfare system. Well, if throwing children and low-income Americans onto the streets is successful reform, then I guess the meaning of goodwill toward men has really become just a trite expression that is uttered at this time of year. In reality, H.R. 4 provides funding for the tax cut for the wealthy that Republicans are so eager to give.

The fundamental flaw of H.R. 4 is that it ignores the basic reason that most adult Americans become welfare recipients in the first place and second, why some stay on welfare for longer periods than they'd like to and that is because there aren't enough jobs available that pay a living wage. So instead of improving job training programs, increasing the minimum wage, providing affordable health or child care, or offering positive alternatives to poverty, H.R. 4 punishes poor folk for being poor. It punishes children who are unfortunate enough to be born into a needy family. This so-called Personal Responsibility Act fails to create a single job and instead creates a whole list of irrational reasons to cut financially strapped Americans and their kids off the welfare rolls.

H.R. 4 rips the bottom out of our current Federal safety net for the least fortunate among us. It abolishes the entitlement status of Aid to Families with Dependent Children [AFDC] and other programs which for the past 60 years have ensured that poor kids in America are provided with at least a basic source of survival. By block granting most of our current welfare programs, with no quality assurances attached, there is no guarantee that these youngsters will receive the basic protections of shelter, clothing, and nourishment.

Mr. Speaker, despite tired, old erroneous sterotypes about lazy welfare recipients who wouldn't take a job if you handed it to them, the truth is that the vast majority of Americans don't want to be on welfare and are struggling to support themselves and their families. H.R. 4 does nothing for these millions of Americans. It offers no jobs, no minimum wage increase, no affordable child care, no job training, no education opportunities, no guarantee of affordable health care, and worst of all, no hope.

I urge my colleagues to reject this bill and force the GINGRICH Republicans to come up with another target for their tax cut for the wealthy. Let's make sure that we care for America's children and protect them in 1996 and beyond.

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to this legislation.

H.R. 4 would end the Federal guarantee of a safety net for poor children that has existed in this country for over 60 years. This legislation would end the entitlement status of Federal assistance to the poor—and replace it with fixed payments to the States to deal with their poor as best as they can.

Funding for these Federal antipoverty programs will be reduced from current program levels by more than $60 billion over the next 7 years. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that by the year 2002, Federal and State spending on these programs will drop to only 85 percent of what we spent last year, when the economy was relatively healthy. Assistance to the poor under this legislation could not possibly meet the level of need that can be reasonably anticipated.

The policies linked to these funding levels are distressing as well. States would be given greater freedom to set certain eligibility and benefit standards. This legislation would cut off AFDC assistance to adult beneficiaries after an arbitrary period of time without providing a level of child care funding that would be necessary for these single parents to go to work. It would, in most cases, deny benefits for children born to women on welfare. The bill

would eliminate the guarantee of health care coverage for millions of low-income children, as well as aged, blind, and disabled individuals.

This legislation may be marketed by the Republicans as reform that is targeted at welfare queens and lazy good-for-nothings who don't want to work, but such characterizations are at best inaccurate. This legislation would cut foster care funding, child care assistance, and food stamps for the working poor, the elderly, abused children, and the disabled by more than $35 billion. These people deserve our help. It is both inhumane and irresponsible to support such cuts.

Some people see the changes contained in this bill as improvements over the current system. Others with longer memories remember both the inability and unwillingness of some State governments to provide even minimal support for their own citizens and neighbors. Supporters of this bill may be right in suggesting that this legislation will result in reduced dependence, reduced illegitimacy, and increased administrative efficiency in some States. But at what price? Clearly, some of the most vulnerable members of our society will bear the burden of these cuts. This legislation would punish innocent children for situations over which they have no control. How much suffering, uncertainty, homelessness, malnutrition, and abuse are we willing to risk?

The current system is clearly in need of serious reform. This legislation, however, does not provide the type of reform that is needed. Democrats unanimously supported a better alternative for welfare reform this spring. On March 23, I joined my Democratic House colleagues in voting for an alternative welfare reform bill that would have gotten families off the welfare rolls and into the workplace. It would have addressed fraud and abuse in the SSI Program without denying benefits to individuals with serious disabilities. It would have provided States with greater flexibility and more resources to undertake welfare reform initiatives. And it maintained a reliable safety net for all Americans.

It is still not too late to adopt such welfare reform. As a first step, I urge my colleagues to reject this conference report and to begin an earnest, nonpartisan dialog on welfare reform.

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to express my support for the conference report on H.R. 4, welfare reform legislation. While this bill is not perfect, it represents a reasonable resolve toward addressing a complex problem.

Congress must act now to overhaul our troubled welfare system before another generation enters a culture of dependency. Though well-intentioned, our current welfare system encourages a cycle of poverty, hopelessness, and despair. At the same time, it discourages family cohesiveness and self-reliance.

I have found it unrealistic to hold out for a perfect welfare reform bill, especially in light of the partisan markup of Congress today. More importantly, it is likely that changes will need to be made as States begin to implement their programs and fine-tuning becomes necessary.

This welfare reform package contains a number of provisions critical to transforming the welfare system. Welfare recipients must work in exchange for benefits. Education and job training will be required, with the emphasis on building a work record. This is a key requirement in helping people become self-sufficient.

A 5-year lifetime limit on assistance is put in place, unless States, due to their circumstances, decide to do otherwise.

The compromise agreement maintains the safety net for child nutrition. Last March, I voted against the House welfare reform bill because it would have block granted child nutrition programs, eliminating the assurance that every poor child has at least one nutritious meal per day. In my judgment, good nutrition is essential for all American children, and this investment is extremely important.

The proposed changes to the Supplemental Security Income [SSI] program are also necessary. Over 2 years ago, I began receiving reports from my constituents of abuse taking place in SSI. There were cases where children with mild behavioral problems qualified for SSI cash benefits. One family then used the money to take a vacation to Florida. Taxpayers have a right to expect an end to fraud and abuse in this program.

We must reform SSI to ensure the program serves the truly disabled. This welfare bill makes strides in the right direction. One of the most important changes is in the definition of disabled. No longer will Individualized Functional Assessments [IFA] be used. The IFA is a subjective gauge to determine whether or not children can engage in ''age-appropriate'' activities effectively. This left a lot of room for potential abuse. While tightening eligibility criteria, it is important to note that this compromise ensures that those children who most need assistance will receive it. For example, children with cystic fibrosis, cerebral palsy, or Down Syndrome requiring full-time care will get the same payment they do now. Those with conditions that are less severe and that do not demand round-the-clock attention will be eligible for 75 percent of benefits.

However, I am concerned that the resources for States to put welfare recipients to work may be inadequate. Many people will require services before they are able to enter the workplace. States will also have to make reasonable exceptions for cases where people are willing to work, but no jobs are available. By most estimates, several thousand entry-level jobs will have to be created in Wisconsin to accommodate welfare beneficiaries entering the job market. States must have the flexibility to support welfare recipients who are willing to work, but unable to do so.

Another of my major concerns is that the bill ends the obligation to provide health care benefits to families on welfare. Without this guarantee, thousands of children and adults could be denied medical care unless the States continue services using Medicaid block grant funds provided under separate legislation. In my estimation, H.R. 4 would be a much stronger bill if this linkage has been left intact. If States are unable or unwilling to provide adequate health care to needy families, this issue will have to be revisited.

I am voting for welfare reform today, trusting the word of State governors who sought control of welfare. The Republican Governors Association pledged its support for this agreement, saying, ''We can do better, and for our children's sake, we must do better.'' They must live up to their promises and do the right thing. Members of Congress, including myself, will be watching them closely to ensure that this is indeed the case.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this motion to recommit the welfare reform bill to the conference committee to make five specific changes. These improvements would ensure an adequate safety net protects our most vulnerable populations while States design new programs to move welfare recipients into the workforce.

I voted against the House-passed bill because the cuts were too draconian. The bipartisan Senate-passed bill was a tremendous improvement, and I am pleased that this conference report adopted many of the Senate's provisions. The conference report, however, fails to fully fund improvement programs, and I urge my Colleagues to join me in voting to recommit the bill to conference to make these changes.

I support bold welfare reform that moves recipients from welfare to work and encourages personal responsibility. This legislation does that, allowing States to try new approaches that meet the needs of their recipients. States are already experimenting with welfare reform. Nearly 40 waivers have been given to States by the Department of Health and Human Services, and the results are encouraging. In giving leeway and dollars to States, however, we must continue to protect children and the disabled. I strongly support the child support enforcement provisions contained in this legislation. We are finally cracking down on deadbeat parents by enacting penalties with real teeth and establishing Federal registries to help track deadbeats.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that this bill contains substantial improvements over the House-passed bill. Unlike the House bill, its maintenance-of-effort provision requires States to maintain 75 percent of their welfare expenditures, it retains the entitlement status of foster care and adoption assistance, it increases child care money from the House bill, and it offers States the opportunity to design welfare programs that move women into work and encourage responsibility. It does not impose a child nutrition block grant on States.

The conference report, however, contains cuts in critical programs that protect children and the disabled. This motion would add a total of $14 billion in funding to child care, Supplemental Security Income [SSI], child welfare and foster care programs, and programs for immigrants. The conference report also severs the link between Medicaid eligibility and welfare, a provision I strongly oppose. This motion restores Medicaid eligibility for welfare recipients.

Without adequate child care funding, many women will not be able to enter the workforce, and States will be unable to meet their workforce participation requirements. The motion to recommit adds child care funds to better meet the needs of the States and women entering the workforce. The Senate welfare reform bill included $3 billion in matching child care funds for States over 5 years. Unfortunately, the conference agreement stretched this money over 7 years, resulting in a $1.2 billion shortfall in the first 5 years. I urge my colleagues to include the entire $3 billion over the first 5 years to provide child care for women entering the workforce.

Current Medicaid law guarantees health coverage to children and families receiving welfare, and both the House and Senate-passed bills continued this linkage. Despite

the House and Senate language, the conference agreement severs this linkage, jeopardizing the health of women and their children as they are trying to get off welfare and take responsibility for their lives. Without Medicaid, one illness could force them back into the cycle of dependency.

While the Senate bill included cuts in the Supplemental Security Income program, the conference agreement goes much further. It creates a new two-tiered system of eligibility which would reduce SSI benefits for 65 percent of the children on the SSI program. This motion to recommit contains the Senate's language that would preserve this important program. The motion to recommit also maintains the entitlement-status of foster care and adoption assistance, a critical safety net for our most vulnerable children. As States enter a recession and their caseloads increase, we cannot afford to cut these programs.

Please join me in voting for the motion to recommit the welfare reform bill to the conference committee. Let's take this opportunity to make changes that will protect our children and allow us to pass this important legislation to move families off welfare.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LINDER). Without objection, the previous question is ordered.

There was no objection.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT OFFERED BY MR. NEAL OF MASSACHUSETTS

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentleman opposed to the conference report?

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I am, in its present form.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts moves to recommit the conference report on the bill H.R. 4 to the committee of conference with instructions to the managers on the part of the House to insist that—

(1) the text of H.R. 1267 be substituted for the conference substitute recommended by the committee of conference; and

(2) the title of H.R. 1267 be substituted for the title of the conference substitute recommended by the committee of conference.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I raise a point of order that this motion to recommit is outside of the scope of the bill that is immediately before the House.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, this simply would give the Democratic caucus the chance to vote for the bill that they voted for last March.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida [Mr. SHAW] makes a point of order against the motion to recommit offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. NEAL]. As discussed in chapter 33, section 26.12 of the Deschler's Procedure, a motion to recommit a conference report may not instruct House conferees to include matter beyond the scope of the differences committed to conference by either House.

The motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts instructs the House conferees on H.R. 4 to bring back a conference agreement consisting of the text of the bill H.R. 1267. Since that bill was not committed to conference, the issue is whether the text of that bill includes matter not contained in either the House-passed version of H.R. 4 or the Senate amendment thereto. An examination of H.R. 1267 reveals that is indeed the case. There are a number of provisions in H.R. 1267 which provide for a refundable dependent care tax credit, an issue not committed to conference by either House in H.R. 4. Therefore, the motion to recommit instructs House conferees to include matter beyond the scope of the differences committed to conference by either House and is not in order. The point of order is sustained.

Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I appeal the ruling of the Chair.

MOTION TO TABLE OFFERED BY MR. SHAW

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LINDER). The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. SHAW moves to lay the appeal on the table.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Florida [Mr. SHAW] to lay on the table the appeal of the ruling of the Chair.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Evidently a quorum is not present.

The Sergeant at Arms will notify absent Members.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 240, nays 182, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 875]

YEAS—240

Allard
Archer
Armey
Bachus
Baker (CA)
Baker (LA)
Ballenger
Barr
Barrett (NE)
Bartlett
Barton
Bass
Bateman
Beilenson
Bereuter
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bliley
Blute
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bono
Brownback
Bryant (TN)
Bunn
Bunning
Burr
Burton
Buyer
Callahan
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Canady
Castle
Chabot
Chambliss
Chenoweth
Christensen
Chrysler
Clinger
Coble
Coburn
Collins (GA)
Combest
Cooley
Cox
Crane
Crapo
Cremeans
Cubin
Cunningham
Davis
Deal
DeLay
Diaz-Balart
Dickey
Doolittle
Dornan
Dreier
Duncan
Dunn
Ehlers
Ehrlich
Emerson
English
Ensign
Everett
Ewing
Fawell
Fields (TX)
Flanagan
Foley
Forbes
Fowler
Fox
Franks (CT)
Franks (NJ)
Frelinghuysen
Frisa
Funderburk
Gallegly
Ganske
Gekas
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gilman
Goodlatte
Goodling
Goss
Graham
Greenwood
Gunderson
Gutknecht
Hamilton
Hancock
Hansen
Hastert
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Heineman
Herger
Hilleary
Hobson
Hoekstra
Hoke
Horn
Hostettler
Houghton
Hunter
Hutchinson
Hyde
Inglis
Istook
Jacobs
Johnson (CT)
Johnson, Sam
Johnston
Jones
Kasich
Kelly
Kim
King
Kingston
Klug
Knollenberg
Kolbe
LaHood
Largent
Latham
LaTourette
Laughlin
Lazio
Leach
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Lightfoot
Linder
Livingston
LoBiondo
Longley
Lucas
Manzullo
Martini
McCollum
McCrery
McDade
McHugh
McInnis
McIntosh
McKeon
Metcalf
Meyers
Mica
Miller (FL)
Molinari
Montgomery
Moorhead
Morella
Myrick
Nethercutt
Neumann
Ney
Norwood
Nussle
Oxley
Packard
Parker
Paxon
Petri
Pombo
Porter
Portman
Pryce
Quinn
Radanovich
Ramstad
Regula
Riggs
Roberts
Rogers
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roth
Roukema
Royce
Salmon
Sanford
Saxton
Scarborough
Schaefer
Schiff
Seastrand
Sensenbrenner
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Shuster
Skaggs
Skeen
Smith (MI)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Solomon
Souder
Spence
Stearns
Stockman
Stump
Talent
Tate
Tauzin
Taylor (NC)
Thomas
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Torkildsen
Upton
Vucanovich
Waldholtz
Walker
Walsh
Wamp
Watts (OK)
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
White
Whitfield
Wicker
Williams
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Zeliff
Zimmer

NAYS—182

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Andrews
Baesler
Baldacci
Barcia
Barrett (WI)
Becerra
Bentsen
Berman
Bevill
Bishop
Bonior
Borski
Boucher
Brewster
Browder
Brown (CA)
Brown (FL)
Brown (OH)
Cardin
Clay
Clayton
Clement
Clyburn
Coleman
Collins (IL)
Collins (MI)
Condit
Costello
Coyne
Cramer
Danner
de la Garza
DeFazio
DeLauro
Dellums
Deutsch
Dicks
Dingell
Dixon
Doggett
Dooley
Doyle
Durbin
Engel
Eshoo
Evans
Farr
Fattah
Fazio
Fields (LA)
Flake
Foglietta
Ford
Frank (MA)
Frost
Furse
Gejdenson
Gephardt
Geren
Gibbons
Gonzalez
Gordon
Green
Gutierrez
Hall (OH)
Hall (TX)
Hastings (FL)
Hefner
Hilliard
Hinchey
Holden
Hoyer
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Johnson (SD)
Johnson, E. B.
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy (MA)
Kennedy (RI)
Kennelly
Kildee
Kleczka
Klink
LaFalce
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lincoln
Lipinski
Lofgren
Lowey
Luther
Maloney
Manton
Markey
Martinez
Mascara
Matsui
McCarthy
McDermott
McHale
McKinney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek
Menendez
Mfume
Miller (CA)
Minge
Mink
Moakley
Mollohan
Moran
Murtha
Neal
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Orton
Owens
Pallone
Pastor
Payne (NJ)
Payne (VA)
Pelosi
Peterson (FL)
Peterson (MN)
Pickett
Pomeroy
Poshard
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Richardson
Rivers
Roemer
Rose

Roybal-Allard
Rush
Sabo
Sanders
Sawyer
Schroeder
Schumer
Scott
Serrano
Sisisky
Skelton
Slaughter
Spratt
Stark
Stenholm
Stokes
Studds
Stupak
Tanner
Taylor (MS)
Tejeda
Thompson
Thornton
Thurman
Torres
Torricelli
Towns
Traficant
Velazquez
Vento
Visclosky
Volkmer
Ward
Waters
Watt (NC)
Waxman
Wilson
Wise
Woolsey
Wyden
Wynn
Yates

NOT VOTING—11

Bryant (TX)
Chapman
Conyers
Edwards
Filner
Harman
Jefferson
Lantos
Myers
Nadler
Quillen

□ 1450

Mr. BROWDER and Mr. MEEHAN changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay''.

So the motion to table the appeal of the ruling of the Chair was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT OFFERED BY MR. ROSE

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LINDER). Is the gentleman opposed to the conference report?

Mr. ROSE. Yes, I am, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LINDER). The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The clerk read as follows:

Mr. ROSE moves to recommit the conference report on the bill H.R. 4 to the committee of conference with the following instructions to the managers on the part of the House:

(1) Recede from Title VII (relating to child protection and adoption) in the conference substitute recommended by the committee of conference and agree to Title XI of the Senate amendment relating to child abuse prevention and treatment.

(2) Recede from that portion of section 301 of the House bill that amends subparagraph (E) of section 658E(c)(2) of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 and agree to the portion of section 602 of the Senate amendment that amends such paragraph.

(3) Agree to that portion of section 602 of the Senate amendment (pertaining to the child care quality set aside) that amends subparagraphs (C) of section 658(c)(3) of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990.

(4) Recede from that portion of section 301 of the House bill that amends subparagraphs (F) and (G) of section 658E(c)(2) of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990.

(5) Recede from that portion of section 301 of the House bill that amends paragraphs (5) and (6) of section 658K(a) of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 and agree to that portion of section 602 of the Senate amendment that amends such paragraphs.

(6) Agree to that portion of section 101(b) of the Senate amendment which establishes a new section 403 of the Social Security Act and relates to State maintenance of effort in lieu of that section of title I of the conference substitute (relating to State maintenance of effort) recommended by the committee of conference.

(7) Recede from section 602(a) and (b) of the House bill (relating to SSI disabled children) and agree to section 211 of the Senate amendment.

(8) Recede from subtitle B of title III of the House bill (relating to family-based and school-based nutrition block grants) and agree to title IV of the Senate amendment (relating to child nutrition programs) insofar as such amendment does not contain such nutrition block grants.

(9) Insist on section 104 of the Senate amendment pertaining to continued application of current standards under the Medicaid program in lieu of that section of the conference substitute (relating to Medicaid) recommended by the committee of conference.

Mr. ROSE (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to recommit be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. ORTON. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. ORTON. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry regarding what it is we are voting on. Am I correct in saying if we adopt this motion that we would be voting to send this back to conference committee with instructions to adopt the changes demanded by the Senate Republicans in the letter just yesterday?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair advises the gentleman that is not a proper parliamentary inquiry.

Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 192, noes 231, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No 876]

AYES—192

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Andrews
Baesler
Baldacci
Barcia
Barrett (WI)
Becerra
Beilenson
Bentsen
Berman
Bevill
Bishop
Bonior
Borski
Boucher
Brewster
Browder
Brown (CA)
Brown (FL)
Brown (OH)
Cardin
Clay
Clayton
Clement
Clyburn
Coleman
Collins (IL)
Collins (MI)
Condit
Costello
Coyne
Cramer
Danner
de la Garza
DeFazio
DeLauro
Dellums
Deutsch
Dicks
Dingell
Dixon
Doggett
Dooley
Doyle
Durbin
Engel
Eshoo
Evans
Farr
Fattah
Fazio
Fields (LA)
Flake
Foglietta
Ford
Frank (MA)
Frost
Furse
Gejdenson
Gephardt
Geren
Gibbons
Gonzalez
Gordon
Green
Gutierrez
Hall (OH)
Hall (TX)
Hamilton
Hastings (FL)
Hefner
Hilliard
Hinchey
Holden
Hoyer
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jacobs
Jefferson
Johnson (SD)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnston
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy (MA)
Kennedy (RI)
Kennelly
Kildee
Kleczka
Klink
LaFalce
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lincoln
Lipinski
Lofgren
Lowey
Luther
Maloney
Manton
Markey
Martinez
Mascara
Matsui
McCarthy
McDermott
McHale
McKinney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek
Menendez
Mfume
Miller (CA)
Minge
Mink
Moakley
Mollohan
Montgomery
Moran
Morella
Murtha
Nadler
Neal
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Orton
Owens
Pallone
Pastor
Payne (NJ)
Payne (VA)
Pelosi
Peterson (FL)
Peterson (MN)
Pickett
Pomeroy
Poshard
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Richardson
Rivers
Roemer
Rose
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Sabo
Sanders
Sawyer
Schroeder
Schumer
Scott
Serrano
Sisisky
Skaggs
Skelton
Slaughter
Spratt
Stark
Stenholm
Stokes
Studds
Stupak
Tanner
Taylor (MS)
Tejeda
Thompson
Thornton
Thurman
Torres
Torricelli
Towns
Traficant
Velazquez
Vento
Visclosky
Volkmer
Ward
Waters
Watt (NC)
Waxman
Williams
Wilson
Wise
Woolsey
Wyden
Wynn
Yates

NOES—231

Allard
Archer
Armey
Bachus
Baker (CA)
Baker (LA)
Ballenger
Barr
Barrett (NE)
Bartlett
Barton
Bass
Bateman
Bereuter
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bliley
Blute
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bono
Brownback
Bryant (TN)
Bunn
Bunning
Burr
Burton
Buyer
Callahan
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Canady
Castle
Chabot
Chambliss
Chenoweth
Christensen
Chrysler
Clinger
Coble
Coburn
Collins (GA)
Combest
Cooley
Cox
Crane
Crapo
Cremeans
Cubin
Cunningham
Davis
Deal
DeLay
Diaz-Balart
Dickey
Doolittle
Dornan
Dreier
Duncan
Dunn
Ehlers
Ehrlich
Emerson
English
Ensign
Everett
Ewing
Fawell
Fields (TX)
Flanagan
Foley
Forbes
Fowler
Fox
Franks (CT)
Franks (NJ)
Frelinghuysen
Frisa
Funderburk
Gallegly
Ganske
Gekas
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gilman
Goodlatte
Goodling
Goss
Graham
Greenwood
Gunderson
Gutknecht
Hancock
Hansen
Hastert
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Heineman
Herger
Hilleary
Hobson
Hoekstra
Hoke
Horn
Hostettler
Houghton
Hunter
Hutchinson
Hyde
Inglis
Istook
Johnson (CT)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Kasich
Kelly
Kim
King
Kingston
Klug
Knollenberg
Kolbe
LaHood
Largent
Latham
LaTourette
Laughlin
Lazio
Leach
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Lightfoot
Linder
Livingston
LoBiondo
Longley
Lucas
Manzullo
Martini
McCollum
McCrery
McDade
McHugh
McInnis
McIntosh
McKeon
Metcalf
Meyers
Mica
Miller (FL)
Molinari
Moorhead
Myrick
Nethercutt
Neumann
Ney
Norwood
Nussle
Oxley
Packard
Parker
Paxon
Petri
Pombo
Porter
Portman
Pryce
Radanovich
Ramstad
Regula
Riggs
Roberts
Rogers
Rohrabacher
Ros-Lehtinen
Roth
Roukema
Royce
Salmon

Sanford
Saxton
Scarborough
Schaefer
Schiff
Seastrand
Sensenbrenner
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Shuster
Skeen
Smith (MI)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Solomon
Souder
Spence
Stearns
Stockman
Stump
Talent
Tate
Tauzin
Taylor (NC)
Thomas
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Torkildsen
Upton
Vucanovich
Waldholtz
Walker
Walsh
Wamp
Watts (OK)
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
White
Whitfield
Wicker
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Zeliff
Zimmer

NOT VOTING—10

Bryant (TX)
Chapman
Conyers
Edwards
Filner
Harman
Lantos
Myers
Quillen
Quinn

☐ 1513

The Clerk announced the following pairs: On the vote:

Ms. Harman for, with Mr. Quinn against.
Mr. Filner for, with Mr. Quillen against.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska changed his vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LINDER). The question is on the conference report.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 245, noes 178, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 877]

AYES—245

Allard
Archer
Armey
Bachus
Baker (CA)
Baker (LA)
Ballenger
Barr
Barrett (NE)
Bartlett
Barton
Bass
Bateman
Bereuter
Bilbray
Bilirakis
Bliley
Blute
Boehlert
Boehner
Bonilla
Bono
Brewster
Browder
Brownback
Bryant (TN)
Bunning
Burr
Burton
Buyer
Callahan
Calvert
Camp
Canady
Castle
Chabot
Chambliss
Chenoweth
Christensen
Chrysler
Clinger
Coble
Coburn
Collins (GA)
Combest
Condit
Cooley
Cox
Cramer
Crane
Crapo
Cremeans
Cubin
Cunningham
Davis
Deal
DeLay
Dickey
Doolittle
Dornan
Dreier
Duncan
Dunn
Ehlers
Ehrlich
Emerson
Ensign
Everett
Ewing
Fawell
Fields (TX)
Flanagan
Foley
Forbes
Fowler
Fox
Franks (CT)
Franks (NJ)
Frelinghuysen
Frisa
Funderburk
Gallegly
Ganske
Gekas
Geren
Gilchrest
Gillmor
Gilman
Gingrich
Goodlatte
Goodling
Gordon
Goss
Graham
Greenwood
Gunderson
Gutknecht
Hall (TX)
Hancock
Hansen
Hastert
Hastings (WA)
Hayes
Hayworth
Hefley
Heineman
Herger
Hilleary
Hobson
Hoekstra
Hoke
Holden
Horn
Hostettler
Houghton
Hunter
Hutchinson
Hyde
Inglis
Istook
Johnson (CT)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Kasich
Kelly
Kim
King
Kingston
Kleczka
Klug
Knollenberg
Kolbe
LaHood
Largent
Latham
LaTourette
Laughlin
Lazio
Leach
Lewis (CA)
Lewis (KY)
Lightfoot
Lincoln
Linder
Lipinski
Livingston
LoBiondo
Longley
Lucas
Manzullo
Martini
McCollum
McCrery
McDade
McHugh
McInnis
McIntosh
McKeon
Metcalf
Meyers
Mica
Miller (FL)
Molinari
Montgomery
Moorhead
Morella
Myrick
Nethercutt
Neumann
Ney
Norwood
Nussle
Oxley
Packard
Parker
Paxon
Peterson (MN)
Petri
Pombo
Porter
Portman
Pryce
Radanovich
Ramstad
Regula
Riggs
Roberts
Rogers
Rohrabacher
Roth
Roukema
Royce
Salmon
Sanford
Saxton
Scarborough
Schaefer
Schiff
Seastrand
Sensenbrenner
Shadegg
Shaw
Shays
Shuster
Skeen
Skelton
Smith (MI)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Solomon
Souder
Spence
Stearns
Stockman
Stump
Talent
Tanner
Tate
Tauzin
Taylor (MS)
Taylor (NC)
Thomas
Thornberry
Tiahrt
Torkildsen
Traficant
Upton
Vucanovich
Waldholtz
Walker
Walsh
Wamp
Watts (OK)
Weldon (FL)
Weldon (PA)
Weller
White
Whitfield
Wicker
Wolf
Young (AK)
Young (FL)
Zeliff
Zimmer

NOES—178

Abercrombie
Ackerman
Andrews
Baesler
Baldacci
Barcia
Barrett (WI)
Becerra
Beilenson
Bentsen
Berman
Bevill
Bishop
Bonior
Borski
Boucher
Brown (CA)
Brown (FL)
Brown (OH)
Bunn
Campbell
Cardin
Clay
Clayton
Clement
Clyburn
Coleman
Collins (IL)
Collins (MI)
Costello
Coyne
Danner
de la Garza
DeFazio
DeLauro
Dellums
Deutsch
Diaz-Balart
Dicks
Dingell
Dixon
Doggett
Dooley
Doyle
Durbin
Engel
Eshoo
Evans
Farr
Fattah
Fazio
Fields (LA)
Flake
Foglietta
Ford
Frank (MA)
Frost
Furse
Gejdenson
Gephardt
Gibbons
Gonzalez
Green
Gutierrez
Hall (OH)
Hamilton
Hastings (FL)
Hefner
Hilliard
Hinchey
Hoyer
Jackson (IL)
Jackson-Lee (TX)
Jacobs
Jefferson
Johnson (SD)
Johnson, E. B.
Johnston
Kanjorski
Kaptur
Kennedy (MA)
Kennedy (RI)
Kennelly
Kildee
Klink
LaFalce
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lofgren
Lowey
Luther
Maloney
Manton
Markey
Martinez
Mascara
Matsui
McCarthy
McDermott
McHale
McKinney
McNulty
Meehan
Meek
Menendez
Mfume
Miller (CA)
Minge
Mink
Moakley
Mollohan
Moran
Murtha
Nadler
Neal
Oberstar
Obey
Olver
Ortiz
Orton
Owens
Pallone
Pastor
Payne (NJ)
Payne (VA)
Pelosi
Peterson (FL)
Pickett
Pomeroy
Poshard
Rahall
Rangel
Reed
Richardson
Rivers
Roemer
Ros-Lehtinen
Rose
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Sabo
Sanders
Sawyer
Schroeder
Schumer
Scott
Serrano
Sisisky
Skaggs
Slaughter
Spratt
Stark
Stenholm
Stokes
Studds
Stupak
Tejeda
Thompson
Thornton
Thurman
Torres
Torricelli
Towns
Velazquez
Vento
Visclosky
Volkmer
Ward
Waters
Watt (NC)
Waxman
Williams
Wilson
Wise
Woolsey
Wyden
Wynn
Yates

NOT VOTING—11

Bryant (TX)
Chapman
Conyers
Edwards
English
Filner
Harman
Lantos
Myers
Quillen
Quinn

☐ 1529

The Clerk announced the following pairs:

On this vote:

Mr. Quinn for, with Ms. Harman against.
Mr. Quillen for, with Mr. Filner against.

So the conference report was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 877, my vote was not recorded because of an apparent mechanical failure of my voting machine. Had I been recorded, I would have voted aye.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the conference report on the bill, H.R. 4.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SPEAKER TO DECLARE RECESSES SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR FROM DECEMBER 23, 1995, THROUGH DECEMBER 27, 1995

Ms. PRYCE. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 320 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 320

Resolved, That the Speaker may declare recesses subject to the call of the Chair on the calendar days of Saturday, December 23, 1995, through Wednesday, December 27, 1995. A recess declared pursuant to this resolution may not extend beyond the calendar day of Wednesday, December 27, 1995.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Ohio [Ms. PRYCE] is recognized for 1 hour.

Ms. PRYCE. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MOAKLEY], the distinguished ranking member of the Committee on Rules, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume.

During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.