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House of Representatives

The House met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. GILLMOR].

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
January 31, 1995.

I hereby designate the Honorable PAUL E. GILLMOR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING BUSINESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 1995, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member except the majority and minority leader limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida [Mr. GOSS] for 5 minutes.

CRISES IN OUR CARIBBEAN IMMIGRATION POLICY

Mr. GOSS. Mr. Speaker, our Caribbean immigration policy is a three-sided disaster. It is a disaster for Floridians, actually for all Americans, for Cubans, and for Haitians. When the Federal Government fails to control our borders or to enforce our immigration laws, the financial responsibility for that inevitably falls to the States. Florida in fact has borne the brunt of the combined impact of the last 2 years of ineffective Caribbean policymaking and inability to enforce laws designed

to create a fair and orderly asylum process which we all want.

We are talking here about hundreds of millions of dollars of unfair costs. Floridians recently applauded Senator BOB GRAHAM for his amendments to the unfunded mandates bill in the other body requiring that the Federal Government must acknowledge the cost of its failed immigration policy. No more ducking and hiding on this.

The Clinton White House has been unable to address the problems in our failed national immigration program. Perhaps it is because they are unwilling, perhaps because they do not know how. They keep repeating pledges to fix what is broken, but it is not happening.

In fact, the administration is headed in exactly the wrong direction in one important area. By negotiating and striking deals with Fidel Castro, the Clinton team is playing into the hands of what we know to be a brutal dictator who stands at the core of one of the most serious immigration enigmas we have. The White House has given him exactly what he wants, a safety valve to drive out a minimum of 20,000 Cubans a year, most of them dissidents, all headed for America, and the legitimacy that comes from a high-level dialog with the United States that gives Castro some cover. Of course, he is also getting a diversion from the internal human rights violations that are going on in Castro Cuba, including the inhumane sinking of the tugboat March 13.

Then there is Haiti where the administration's performance has been especially troubling. In what I would call a ham-handed effort to bring the military regime to its knees there, the White House slapped a brutal embargo on the poorest people in the hemisphere and then trumpeted a policy that said, "If you can make it out to international waters, we'll pick you up and give you a safe haven."

Is it any wonder that desperate Haitians came by the tens of thousands? It was a self-manufactured crisis that is now a serious infection festering under a band-aid solution.

At the height of the combined Cuban and Haitian crises this past summer, more than 30,000 Cuban refugees and thousands of Haitian refugees sat in limbo in the heat, in tent camps in Panama and Guantanamo, patrolled and operated by United States soldiers at a very substantial cost to United States taxpayers.

In the past few months, the administration has been quietly paroling many refugees into the United States, more than we know, we do not have a number, more than 1,000 from the Panama camps alone. No matter how much compassion Americans have for the plight of these refugees, and we do have compassion because of the miserable situations in their countries, they also know that this type of open-ended policy creates more problems than it solves. Why? Because the Federal dollars do not flow to the places where the refugees do, and when it comes time to settle these newcomers into the United States, there is no provision for them. It discourages individuals from using the orderly asylum process that is out there, which has worked well and served this country for years. And it encourages the truly desperate to take to the high seas in their rickety, overloaded boats, and sadly we have many examples of tragedy.

It is also a losing proposition for most of the refugees. The White House has just completed the process of returning Haitian refugees to their country, the last 4,000 dramatically against their will, literally kicking and screaming, being dragged off boats. These repatriations occurred despite the protests of the Haitian Government which asked for time to set up a system to reintegrate the refugees and

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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avoid further destabilization of the tenuous calm that exists in Haiti today. Many of these disgruntled and frightened refugees are camped out now in Port-Au-Prince demanding employment from a government that has no means to provide employment.

Likewise the Cuban refugees are still smarting from the abrupt abrogation of the terms of the Cuban Adjustment Act.

All the while the policy is failing in every direction, the bills are mounting. Look for a defense supplemental as early as next week to provide billions of American tax dollars in funds to pay for these extra missions. And we must not forget that there are more than 6,000 American soldiers at risk on the ground in Haiti while there are still more in Panama right now donning riot gear and strapping on rifles in anticipation of rioting, arson, escape attempts, and suicides among the 7,500 Cubans being moved from Panama to Guantanamo now.

What does the administration plan to deal with its Caribbean crises? Where is the focus on national security in our own backyard? It appears from the weekend papers that the Clinton administration has decided that a replacement for Joycelyn Elders in the Surgeon General's Office takes a higher priority than the search for a new CIA director or for attention on our national security. I think that says something. I think maybe it is time we paid attention to the real problems that are affecting this country and leave some of the social thoughts to another day.

GETTING TOUGH ON CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentlewoman from Colorado [Mrs. SCHROEDER] is recognized during morning business for 5 minutes.

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate this opportunity because today a group of bipartisan Congresswomen that have worked for so long and so hard on child support enforcement are once again offering and putting in the RECORD our bill on tough child support enforcement. We have been trying for many years to get this country to focus on this issue.

It seems to us that everybody wants to talk about the mother and how bad the mother is, but let us realize that these children came with two parents, and let us talk about both parents having responsibility. Where is it written that the Federal Government will pick up if one parent decides to skip out? That is exactly what has been happening.

Mr. Speaker, we know that when it comes to car payments, it is unbelievable but less than 3 percent of America's car payments go uncollected. They are going to dig us up and think we worshiped our cars. Yet when we look at child support enforcement pay-

ments, let me tell you, we know that that is a devastating record.

The lowest estimate is that \$34 billion went uncollected last year. Now, that is a lot of money. The reason we feel so strongly about this is that we think, had we been doing strong child support enforcement, we would not have to be worried about welfare. That is welfare prevention. Let us be perfectly honest about that. Many women are on welfare because they are the only ones supporting that child.

Mr. Speaker, our bill goes at all sorts of things. It says the Federal Government should not allow passports to people who are behind in child support. It mandates that if you are behind in child support, it gets reported to the credit bureau so people know that. It also requires direct withholding by employers immediately, so it is automatic and that is the end of it. It also says that States should not allow licenses to people who are behind in child support orders.

It is amazing how many professional people, such as doctors, are not paying their child support. Why? And States have hesitated to really go collect it because they think they will just make somebody mad and they just pass the bill on to the Federal Government.

I really wish this child support enforcement had been in the Contract With America. I do not know why they did not put it in the Contract With America. To me it is one of the things that most Americans can agree on that it makes such sense. The Congresswoman have been working on this forever and ever and ever, and it is absolutely amazing how difficult it is to move this front and center and get a focus on it.

If we are going to talk about family responsibility and we are going to talk about what families should be doing for young children, then I think we have to say that we have to use the laws of this land to make sure people take parenting very seriously. Very seriously.

I am really pleased that this comprehensive child support bill will be going in. It will be going in today. I hope every American joins with the Congresswomen in saying this is what should be at the front of the session. This is what we should be doing in these first 100 days. In fact, we should have done it 100 years ago. And we ought to get this online. We ought to get the system up where all the States are participating and sharing information.

In this great information era, it is absolutely amazing that people can cross State lines and avoid being picked up. No one else would tolerate that. I think it is long overdue that the children of this country have to tolerate that. Basically, they have had to tolerate it because they cannot vote, they are not that important, and if they are not that important a priority to this Government, then we allow it

not to be an important priority to parents.

Either we mean that parents have to be responsible or we do not mean it. I think any child would much prefer having a parent be responsible than having the taint of having to rely on welfare payments, but they may go to welfare payments rather than starve, obviously.

When we look at the average welfare recipient, they are not happy about being a welfare recipient. They would much prefer this. But have you ever figured out what it costs to get a lawyer, what it costs to track people across State lines, what it costs to enforce these orders? That is why they go uncollected, because the States have not wanted to bother to do it, the Federal Government has kind of winked at it, and they have picked up the safety net that everyone fell into.

I hope every American joins with us and says, "Let's get this out. Let's get this out." We came very close to getting it out last year. Everybody talks a good game but somehow we never get it to the out box. If we make a massive effort, this is one way that we start saying parents become responsible for the children they bring into this world rather than the taxpayers become the parents of last resort. That is not a pretty picture for anyone and it just keeps generating the problems that we have seen in the past.

I hope everyone joins us in cosponsoring the bill.

Later on this week, I and a bipartisan group of Congresswomen will renew our efforts to make sure that the responsibility of fathers is not forgotten in the current welfare debate. Last Congress, the Congresswomen decided it was time for us to speak with one voice on child support enforcement. We want to hold children harmless in the economics of divorce.

Thus, the Congresswomen will reintroduce the Child Support Amendments of 1995. This bill is an improved, revised version of the Child Support Responsibility Act of 1994 (H.R. 4570), which I introduced on behalf of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues last June.

That bill, and the one we will be introducing this week, builds upon the 1992 recommendations of the U.S. Commission on Interstate Child Support. Its goal is to reduce the estimated \$34 billion that deadbeat parents, mostly fathers, owe in child support. This bill puts teeth into the child support enforcement system so that money can be recovered and paid to the children whose economic well-being depends on these payments.

Child support enforcement is a pressing issue in our Nation. A majority of Members readily agree that immediate action is needed to strengthen our present child support system. I believe that for many families, child support payments are in reality welfare prevention measures.

In spite of a decade of congressional efforts to improve the collection of child support, deadbeat parents still fail to pay \$34 billion annually. Our child support system is quickly becoming a national disgrace. Each of us has heard from constituents who face dire consequences when a child support payment