

Seventy percent of all African-American children growing up in single parent families live at or below the poverty level. Surely these figures demonstrate that decisive action is needed.

There are many things we can do to improve and enhance the current child support system. For example, we can require uniform procedures for dealing with interstate cases, which are currently the most difficult to pursue. We can improve tracking of delinquent parents through national reporting of child support orders and by establishing a Federal registry of child support orders.

Moreover, we need tough new penalties for those who refuse to pay, such as authorizing withholding part of wages and allow suspension of professional, occupational, and even drivers' licenses as a means of forcing the delinquent parent to comply with support payment orders.

If we do not take action on child support now, we will be requiring young mothers to be responsible, while we give fathers an exemption. The Personal Responsibility Act, H.R. 4, cuts young, single mothers from welfare, but it does nothing to improve child support enforcement.

By ignoring child support enforcement we are sending the wrong message. It says that the noncustodial parent who is 50 percent responsible for the child does not have any real responsibility to support his child. If more noncustodial parents are made to pay child support, welfare will not be necessary for many families.

Sensitivity has always been a characteristic of the American experience. In good times and bad, we have been a caring nation that values responsibilities to continue this tradition and make sure that children in America are protected.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, America is experiencing a serious problem: Too many working and able-bodied parents are not taking responsibility for their children. The time has come to declare war on our current welfare system so that we can properly address the situation.

In every war, battles must be fought and won. One of the biggest battles we must fight is improving and reforming this Nation's child support enforcement problem.

The reasons for engaging in this battle are clear: 63 percent of the absent parents in this country do not pay child support. Approximately \$35 billion is lost each year in uncollected child support payments. And in my own State of Maryland, absent parents defaulted on more than \$325 million in court-ordered child support in 1993. Most importantly, we all must remember—the children suffer when child support is not paid.

As a nation and as a society we cannot afford a social safety net without expecting obligations and demanding responsibilities. For any type of welfare reform to be successful, individuals must accept the responsibility of working and providing for their families. In 1990, absent parents paid only \$14 billion in child support. But if child support reflecting current ability to pay were established and enforced, single parents and their children would

have received almost \$48 billion. This translates into more money for food, shelter, clothing, and child care and a reduction in the Federal burden. We must send a clear signal that both parents who bring children into this world must take responsibility for supporting them.

That is why we need a tough, smart child support program which requires both mothers and fathers to live up to their responsibilities. We must target those individuals who believe they don't have to take care of their kids because their neighbors—hard-working, tax paying, responsible citizens—will. The buck must start and stop with the parents.

The children of this country need the billions in outstanding and uncollected child support. Payment of child support could save this country billions of dollars if we could move people off welfare and keep others from joining the rolls. The financial burden of supporting the children must once and for all shift from the government to the parents. If we can do this, we will be well on our way to winning our first battle in the war on welfare.

Any comprehensive welfare proposal must include child support enforcement. Yet, the Republican Contract With America does not. Are the Republicans saying to the nonpaying parents that they do not have to support their kids? If they are here to promote personal responsibility and do the people's business, this critical area should have been included in the Personal Responsibility Act.

At the urging of Democrats, I am pleased Chairman SHAW has agreed to include this child support enforcement within the Personal Responsibility Act.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MARKEY].

The SPEAKER pro tempore. (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to extend my time by 3 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. That request cannot be extended in fairness to others that have had the 60-minute.

Under the rules, a single Member cannot control more than an hour. However, if another Member would like to yield time, that would be appropriate.

COST EFFECTIVENESS IN WELFARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MARKEY] is recognized for 2 minutes.

Mr. MARKEY. I thank the Speaker very much, and I thank the Republican leadership who are at this point graciously allowing me to speak out of order.

Mr. Speaker, at this juncture, at the conclusion of the special order, we are invoking Mo Udall's old saying that everything has been said but not everybody has said it.

As we conclude this, I would just like to point out that one out of five children in the United States is poor. Poor. Fifteen million children live in single-parent homes, that is, where there is only one parent, and those children are

five times as likely to be poor as children who live in families that have two parents.

□ 2000

That is a staggeringly large number, millions and millions of children who are in this condition.

Thirty-seven percent of the women who control these households get support from the men who father the children, but over 60 percent of these women get no help from the fathers.

Let me give some statistics. Nationwide each year \$34 billion goes uncollected in child support from fathers, \$34 billion. Contrast that with the total amount of money that every taxpayer in America is asked to contribute to help out these mothers. It is \$23 billion.

So for all of the AFDC mothers and children in America, the total amount of money which is paid is \$23 billion.

The fathers owe \$34 billion. Taxpayers have every right to be outraged. Why should they dip into their pockets to pay for what fathers across this country should be responsible for kicking in every day? I don't think the average taxpayer would mind paying if they felt mothers and fathers actually needed it.

I hope we continue to discuss this subject in the future.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order this evening.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

PROGRESS ON THE CONTRACT WITH AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HOKE] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to this special order that I have asked some of my colleagues to participate in, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. PORTMAN], the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. JONES], the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. KINGSTON], and what we want to do this evening is review some of the things we have already done in this Congress, review some of the things that have happened immediately preceding and some of the things that we expect to be doing.

I want to point out first of all that today we took a very important step on the road to recovering the confidence of the American people that began with the election last November. That is because what we did today is