[Mrs. SMITH of Washington addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

CAN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF AMERICA?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. WAMP] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to ask a series of questions and to make some statements, and the first question is: Can the Federal Government solve the problems of America? You know, I asked that question as I campaigned for the last 4 years.

I really believe the average person out there is this country does not think for a minute that the Federal Government is going to solve the problems that we have in this country, and there is a tremendous amount of misinformation and disinformation.

I returned to Washington today from Chattanooga, TN, my home, and I can tell you from being there this weekend that this issue has outraged so many people who know better and know that there is some untruth being told. The words ''cutting'' and ''eliminating'' are being used over and over again on editorial pages all across this country. It has gotten so out of hand that small children are writing letters to Members of Congress, I am sure at the instruction of their teachers or maybe even their parents, saying, ''Mr. Congressman, please, don't cut my lunches. Please, don't eliminate the food from my table.''

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And another question I have tonight is, who is actually taking advantage of children here? When you ask small children who don't know any better to write a letter to their Congressman with the threat that you are going to take food off of their plate in front of them and they are not explaining to these children what the truth is.

You know block grants is what we are talking about. Decentralization is what we are talking about. It is a recognition that things are not working, things have not been working. Federal Government got too big, too powerful, out of control. It is outrageous, and we are trying to block grant these dollars back to the State and the local governments.

You know, Al Harris runs the Chattanooga housing authority in my home city, and does an outstanding job there. They are concerned. Let me tell you what he says about block grants. He says block grants work. He says, ''Send the money down, unleash the shackles. We got too many rules, too many regulations, too much bureaucracy. Send us the money. We can produce.'' He looks at this as a good thing, as decentralizing the Federal Government and sending the money on down.

I heard in church Sunday morning a teacher in Hamilton County, Tennessee, said, We have got problems with school lunch programs. Those people who are in need are not getting the services because people who do not qualify are abusing the system. People are applying for and receiving free lunches in our schools and they drive up in about BMW's to let their kids off in the morning. You know why that happens? Because this is a big Federal bureaucracy micromanaged out of Washington, DC, and every time we have turned these programs over to the Federal Government they have got out of hand. Fraud sets in and money is wasted and people do without.

In about 2 weeks, this House, I believe this majority, will vote to put $500 in the pocket of every child in this country whose parents are working and paying taxes. That is the kind of child relief—that is the kind of child support that we need to be engaged in, and there is more help on the way. We are sending this money back to the States. We are not cutting or eliminating anything, and my colleagues have said that over and over again.

What I think this really boils down to is whether or not we trust our State and our local governments, because I do not believe the liberals in this country will acknowledge that our States and our local governments have done a better job than we have done up here in Congress for the last 30 years.

You know, they are balancing their budgets at home. They are responsible. They have got their priorities in order. They are not about to go out and borrow money with a credit card like these voting cards here. The worst and most expensive credit card in the history of the world here is the credit card that Members of Congress use to vote in this Chamber, moneys that they do not have, and it is out of hand. We have got to do something about it.

So let us send the money back to the responsible governments, the State and the local governments. I know in my home State that our governor and our State legislature is going to do the right thing with these moneys when we block grant them back there, and if your program is good, you will get more money, not less money, through block grants and then you won't have the Federal Government breathing down your throat on everything.

I want to close with a statement I know you have heard before but we need to remember it right now, 1995, while this country is at risk. A government big enough to give you everything you want is a government big enough to take from you everything you have.

Patriotic, freedom-loving Americans need to recognize that our Federal Government is out of control. We have got more government than our Founding Fathers ever wanted. We have got more government on a Federal level, more micromanagement, more bureaucrats, more waste, fraud and abuse than I ever wanted to deal with, and we are up here trying to do something about it and they are not telling the truth.

Now, if we are going to have a legitimate dialog in this country about what is best for our children and our future, let us at least be honest. We are not running campaigns anymore. That comes up next year. You know, we knew when we got into it you would not tell the truth about us in our campaigns. That is part of campaigning. This is lawmaking. This is serious business.

Let us at least tell the country the truth on this issue of block grants because this is the beginning of downsizing the Federal Government, returning the power and the money to the States that have acted responsibly.

THE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kentucky [Mr. WHITFIELD] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, when the school lunch program was started back in 1946, the research that I have done indicates that the program cost about $70 million that year, and the projections indicate that by the year 2000 the food programs in the United States will be approaching $7 billion.

Now, when you talk about hunger in America, I want to emphasize this evening that those of us on this side of the aisle are just as concerned about the welfare of children throughout America as those people on the other side of the aisle. They certainly do not have any sole discretion about and concern for the needs of children around this country.

But when you have a program, and I might also add that in addition to this school lunch program, there are thousands of programs out there to provide help to American citizens, and that is part of the problem, because you cannot solve a $4.7 trillion deficit problem in America without coming up with new approaches and new solutions to very difficult problems.

Now, all of us would like to do everything that we can do to eliminate hunger in this country. We would like to eliminate disease in this country. We would like to eliminate child abuse completely in this country. All of us agree to that. But we have a significant problem. How do we continue to provide the money for all of the thousands of programs out there, whether they are child care programs, breakfast programs, lunch programs, after school programs, child abuse programs, or whatever they may be?

So the challenge that we have is to come up with innovative solutions to provide the maximum benefit for children throughout America at the lowest

cost, and that is what this block grant does that we are now proposing.

We are trying to send this money back to the State and say, bureaucrats in Washington are not close to the problem. The people in the State may be more innovative. Some governors around this State have shown in the last 10 years that they can come up with innovative programs to make a real difference in saving dollars and providing more benefits for the recipients, and that is what we are looking for in this block grant on this school lunch program.

Now, many speakers have already indicated today that our program provides 4.5 percent more nationally for this program each year over the next few years. But I want to, as we have talked about this program in very general ways, we have not been specific enough on how the program really works. And I want to take a moment this afternoon to talk about that.

First of all, in a school lunch program in America today, there are three basic programs. First of all, there are those children who receive free lunches, free breakfast and free snacks, and they receive it because they are somewhere between 135 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level, and they should receive free food because they are not going to get a nutritious meal anywhere else and our program is going to see to it that they continue to receive it.

Then the second group of students, in my home State of Kentucky, the average meal at lunch time on the school lunch program costs $1.60 approximately. And this second group, they pay 40 cents for that lunch.

Now, the Federal Government each month writes the local school board or school nutrition program a check. For those students who paid zero for their lunch, the Federal Government writes a check for $1.60 for every meal served, and by the way, 25 million meals are served around this country everyday. And for those students who paid 40 cents, the government writes a check each month for $1.20 to the local school program.

Now, there is another group of students and those are students who belong to their parents, may be doctors, may be lawyers, may be businessmen, coal operators, coal miners, but they can afford to pay for their lunch and they pay $1.20, still 40 cents below the cost of the lunch. And then on top of this—the Federal Government writing a check for the balance between 40 cents and $1.20, we also sent an additional 17 cents for all meals served.

So all I am saying is that we can provide a program where the wealthy children in this country pay their full share and we can benefit more poorer children, provide better nourishment, more nutrition, and I think that the entire country will benefit from this innovative approach to the school lunch program.

BLOCK GRANTING THE SCHOOL-BASED NUTRITION PROGRAMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. RIGGS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. RIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I had to participate in this particular debate because it has grated on me, quite honestly, as a member of the House Appropriations Committee and a member of the Economic and Educational Opportunities Committee. I see a couple of my colleagues here, Mr. GOODLING, the chairman of the full committee, and Mr. CUNNINGHAM, one of the subcommittee chairmen, and it has grated on me to hear these repeated falsehoods and exaggerated claims coming from the other side of the aisle.

It has also reminded me of that wonderful statement that there are really three kinds of lies. There is lies, there is more lies, and there is damn lies, and we have been hearing an awful lot of damn lies and out and out falsehoods propagated by our friends on the Democratic side of the aisle regarding our plans with respect to block granting the school-based nutrition programs back to State and local education agencies and our plans to dramatically overhaul and reform the American welfare system.

Now, I am a former school board member. In a sense, that is how I cut my political teeth, because believe me, school boards remind one of the old saying of I think the late Speaker Tip O'Neill, that all politics are local, and I have a great deal of confidence and faith in those men and women who come forward, purely in a volunteer capacity, to serve on the school boards of their local communities.

I am fully confident that they will provide for the nutritional needs of our school kids at the local level and that is obviously the best way for government to function.

Now, we believe that block granting the school lunch and breakfast programs, obviously, as this chart indicates that my colleagues have made repeated reference to tonight during special orders, we believe that our block grant programs to State and local education agencies obviously does not mean the end of nutrition assistance to needy children. Instead, what it means is the end of funding to Federal bureaucrats.

Some facts to go with the chart as we have attempted to reinforce tonight with our colleagues, and also to the American citizens who might be viewing these proceedings, some facts. Number one, funding in the nutrition block grant will increase 4.5 percent per year, as the chart indicates.

Number two, at least 80 percent of the funds must be spent on low-income children, that is to say, the neediest of children in local schools around the country.

And number three, not more than 2 percent of the block grant funds can be spent on administrative expenses at the State government level, ensuring that more funds are spent on nutrition services for children.

And, ladies and gentlemen, let me just stress that this is part of an overall approach by Republicans in reinventing and downsizing the Federal Government. We are attempting to respond to this patchwork that we have today of over 600 separate Federal categorical programs that have been authorized by past Congresses over a period of many years, and as a consequence, we are putting forward proposals to radically reform this current maze of congressionally mandated government human service programs.

We are considering proposals that we will be bringing to the House floor in coming weeks to consolidate block grant programs in the areas of education, job training, nutrition, child care, and welfare.

And why the block grant approach? Well, the obvious reason. This is a fundamental and long overdue reform necessary back in Washington because these Federal categorical programs are too proscriptive. They are overregulated. They are incredibly fragmented. As my colleagues on the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities will attest, when you are talking about 153 federally mandated job training programs for adult and youth, we are obviously talking about government gone amuck and creating far too many programs that can be reasonably administered for productive results and actual benefits to recipients.

So these programs are fragmented and many times often duplicative with the programs at the State and even local government level. We think block granting will actually encourage flexibility, local control, innovation, and ultimately greater accountability.

And why are we taking this approach? Because we want, by cutting down on Federal bureaucracy here in Washington, to apply those cost savings to reducing the deficit and ultimately balancing the Federal budget, as we have promised our fellow Americans we will do by the year 2002.

The only way we can do that is to decentralize authority and responsibility, and, yes, funding and revenues back to the States. In turn, we will be dispersing power to our fellow citizens and will be empowering those Americans who are most in need of government services and encouraging them to take greater responsibility for their own lives and their own destinies.

I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I wish the President and my colleagues on the other side of the aisle here cared enough about our children to balance the budget. I want to say that one more time. I wish our Democratic colleagues cared enough about our children to balance the budget. That is simply not the case.

In conclusion, we believe that we have a moral imperative to balance the