not to exceed $10 million. But the bureaucrats decided to add environmental language to the lease—despite the fact that the environmental issues had been addressed and resolved during three review processes and the fact that no launches would take place for two years thus eliminating the possibility of an environmental problem.

Then the civilian bureaucrats decided that the Space Center would have 60 days to submit a certified insurance policy. Clearly unreasonable because insurance companies rarely, if ever, issue certification of policies within 60 days.

Then, the bureaucrats decided that there should be no cap on the amount that could be sought and awarded in a liability suit—then Spaceport could be sued for any amount of money. Obviously no reasonable insurance company would issue a policy where they would be required to pay unlimited damages.

In the end, due in large part to bipartisan support and participation, the primary lease between the Space Center and the Air Force was signed.

Mr. Speaker, the process by which this lease agreement came to be signed should not be a model for future negotiations. It should have never reached an 11th hour deadline. It should have never reached a point where the Space Center was in danger of shutting its doors. It should never have reached a point where hundreds, and ultimately thousands of jobs, could have been lost. It should never have put tens of millions of dollars in private sector investment in jeopardy. It should never have put the future of commercial space development in California on the line.

One of the reasons the voters of America responded as they did during the 1994 elections was because of problems such as this. The American people have demanded a smaller and more efficient federal government that puts the interests of its people ahead of everything else. This ladies and gentleman, is the essence of the Contract with America.

While spaceport development and commercial space are not part of the 100-day agenda, they are very much in line with the goals and spirit of the 104th Congress. Our government must be willing to make America a strong and vibrant competitor in the international commercial space market. Further, the government must demonstrate to private industry that they are committed to making America a leader in the international commercial space market.

Mr. Speaker, the time for action is now. All of our international competitors—France, China, Russia, Canada, Japan, Australia—are moving forward in the commercial space arena. We cannot fall behind. Spaceport development must go forward in conjunction with an aggressive U.S. commercial space policy.

And who stands to benefit from this approach? Certainly space states such as Alaska, California, Florida, Virginia, New Mexico, Colorado, Texas, Hawaii and others. But, more importantly, our nation stands to benefit. There is enormous economic potential if we are willing to do what is necessary to successfully compete.

As we saw at crunch time on the Vandenberg lease, commercial space is not a partisan issue—it is an American issue. It is an issue where Republicans and Democrats can come together and unite behind a cause that ultimately benefits all Americans.

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WELFARE REFORM: SHELL GAME

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Ms. DELAURO] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my colleagues once again in exposing the myths that the Republicans keep repeating about their welfare reform proposal and its impact on child nutrition programs. Later this evening, two of my colleagues will demonstrate how the Republicans are misleading the American people and how this block grant plan clearly cuts funding for essential child nutrition programs. But before they begin, here are the facts.

The Republicans claim their block grant does not cut funding for child nutrition programs, only the growth rate of these programs. They would like everyone to believe that their proposal increases funding for programs, such as school lunch, by 4.5 percent each year.

The truth is their 4.5 percent increase in funding for School Lunch is a fabrication. In fact, the bill doesn't even designate funding specifically for the school lunch, breakfast, or any other school-based meal program. The Republicans' numbers are nothing more than assumptions—I repeat, assumptions—of how much States may choose to use for lunch programs.

Even if States spent all of the money they receive under this block grant, this mythical funding increase would fall $300 million short of the amount necessary to meet real needs. That is because the Republicans' plan won't keep pace with expected increases in program enrollment, inflation, or a possible recession. These needs require a 6.5 percent increase, so even the mythical 4.5 percent increase falls woefully short.

The Republicans' mythical funding also includes only cash assistance and not the value of direct purchases of food goods such as cheese and fruit. These direct purchases of food are a critical part of the school lunch program. In the first year, Republicans cut $51 million from direct food assistance. Over 5 years, they cut $600 million. That is a total shortfall of $1 billion even if they live up to their hollow promise of a 4.5 percent increase in cash assistance.

That 4.5 percent promise comes with all kinds of trap doors that will drop even more kids from the school lunch program.

The first trap door is that States would be required to use only 80 percent of the school block grant for school meals. Governors may transfer 20 percent to other programs. That means a potential additional loss of $5 billion dollars from the program—$1 billion a year. In my home State of Connecticut, if the Governor had this kind of discretion today and exercised it, the School Lunch Program would lose $2 million in 1995 alone.

The second trap door is that these funding increases are not guaranteed—they will be subjected to the political whims of the annual budget process. So the Congress each year will be able to vote to reduce funding even more and drop even more kids from the program.

The Republicans also claim that their bill will cut bureaucrats, not kids. They couldn't be further from the truth. If Republicans were only interested in cutting administrative costs they would have done their homework: The entire administrative budget for all USDA feeding programs is $106 million per year. The Republican plan would cut $860 million in 1996 child nutrition programs alone. The bottom line is their cuts far exceed what is needed to control administrative costs.

The truth is, if the Republican proposal is enacted, 3,600 kids will be dropped from the School Lunch Program in Connecticut in the first year alone, and over half a million kids will be dropped nationwide.

The Congressional Budget Office has concluded the Republican proposal will cut $2.3 billion over 5 years from school based nutrition programs and $7 billion from all child nutrition programs over 5 years.

Republicans though don't want to admit this. They actually believe that these are not cuts. They boast that their plan provides savings. I ask you, how can you have savings, if you don't have cuts? This is the biggest Republican myth of them all.

The tragedy in this debate, Mr. Speaker, is that these Republican myths are being perpetuated so that drastic cuts can be made in a program that everybody agrees is working—and working well. And the savings—the money that will no longer be used to pay for a child's school lunch—will be used to pay for a tax break for the wealthiest Americans. It's shameful. It's mean spirited. It's just plain wrong.

WELFARE REFORM

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, as we enter into this debate on welfare in this country, I think it is important to recognize that my colleague from west