the President in February, the first of the year. Still nothing. But there he was, just a few days later, talking big before the National Association of Counties, while the President's waiver application grows cobwebs on the President's desk, Bill Clinton declared, to applause in fact, here it is in the paper, in the Washington Times, ''Clinton wants States to have freedom to adjust welfare.''

□ 2145

He basically said, to applause, that we should abolish the waiver system altogether. Well, Mr. Clinton, we are waiting.

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SALMON. No, I will not yield.

Approve the waiver now, President Clinton.

Mr. Speaker, I also forgot to say that there is one other crucial difference between President Clinton and Charles Barkley. I still believe Charles Barkley somewhere in the country could win an election.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Arkansas.

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to tell the gentleman we will have a great deal for you tomorrow, because in the Deal substitute plan we give the flexibility to the States to not have to deal with those waivers. It is a wonderful proposal that will be presented tomorrow and it is an opportunity for you to take a look at things that we will be able to offer to the States, flexibility to deal with their own plan.

Mr. SALMON. Mr. Speaker, I reclaim the balance of my time, and I would like to say I believe in private sector jobs and in more government-funded programs.

Mrs. LINCOLN. That is exactly right; that is what we do.

Mr. SALMON. I do believe people ought to have the dignity to be able to go out into the private sector to be able to get jobs, and really, if sincerely you do believe that this is a good idea, would you call President Clinton for me tomorrow and tell him to pass that waiver?

DIGNITY OF WORK IS WHAT WELFARE REFORM IS ALL ABOUT

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

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, let me just say as I start here, I have been here 6 years and we have been working on this welfare reform program almost from the day I got here.

The people who have been working on the Deal substitute have been working tirelessly for the last 3 years that I know of, and we appreciate the opportunity to come to the floor tomorrow and offer the Congress, the House, a chance to vote with us.

I have been disappointed in the debate tonight. I still have trouble determining why a school lunch program has anything to do with helping people go back to work. When we started our welfare reform plan, we went from the principle that work is dignity, work is what people need, work will make this country stronger, and we insist that if you want something from the Government you must do something for yourself.

For people who are talking about the school lunch program, the school lunch program started 49 years ago and it was a national program. The reason it was started by President Truman was because so many kids from around the country in poor, rural States were unable to pass their draftee physical.

School nutrition, what kids have for lunch is not what we are about. We are about reforming the welfare system so people can go back to work and earn their own way.

We give more State flexibility in the Deal bill than anybody does. Right here, provisions, AFDC benefits, State option; mandated in H.R. 4. Families, States option, mandated in H.R. 4. Child support pass-through, State option for Deal, mandated in H.R. 4.

It is ironic that on the day the President signs the unfunded mandates legislation, which many of us have been working on for 2 or 3 years, and again we thank the majority for bringing that to the floor, that we have seen a bill now come before the floor on welfare for mandating to the States many of the things that we leave to State flexibility on the wonderful theory that many Republicans have professed through the years that local people know best.

We have work first. We give States flexibility in how they do that, and we do one other thing for those people that are just barely getting by and they are working, they are living by the rules, playing by the rules and that is this: We include public assistance for purposes of taxable income on the basic fair theory that a welfare dollar should not be worth more than a work-earned dollar. We are the only plan that does that.

Now we have, many of us who have been voting for some of the contract provisions as conservative Democrats, have asked some of our moderate Republican friends to join us on the theory, as the gentleman said earlier tonight, neither party has a monopoly on wisdom and virtue, and I think anybody who does not subscribe to that theory is fooling themselves. We asked for some bipartisan support on our plan. The Deal plan is the best plan in this Congress. You would not have had to have all of these amendments today you have had to put up. It is already in our package, if you would just give us the same consideration you ask from time to time from us, and it would be bipartisan. Come on over, read the Deal bill. If you have not, you ought to, because what we do in this substitute is exactly what many of you all have professed you want to do, and that is bring back the dignity of work to the American people and help them get off of welfare.

That is what welfare reform is about. We can talk all night about whether there is a cut in the child school lunch program or not. It does not have much to do with helping someone get back to work, an adult, and that is what we try to do, and that is what we will do. And we know this: Real welfare reform has to be a Federal-State partnership and you cannot just block grant it and say States, here is some money, do the best you can with it. That will not work. That will not put people back to work. And that is why we got this letter today from the United States Conference of Mayors. They know what is going to hit them and they do not have the equipment or the ability to handle it, quite frankly, and you cannot just say block grant it and let the States do it any way they want to.

We do, and we enter into a true Federal-State partnership and we clean up the mess here in Washington in the Deal bill before we turn it over to the States. And I believe, and I would ask everybody here to read our bill and to give us serious consideration tomorrow.

I think you will find it is by far the best approach.

WELFARE REFORM

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to pick up on the comments of the last speaker. I think it is important to note that the gentleman from Tennessee thanked the majority party for getting the unfunded mandates legislation to the floor of the House as has the majority party brought welfare reform finally to the floor of the House. And I will say this to my moderate Democrat friends over there, that we are glad you have a plan.

I was real disappointed when the President decided to end the welfare debate as we know it by not offering a plan. I thought he was going to end welfare, but it was just end the welfare debate. So I am glad you all have stepped in and filled what is obviously a leadership vacuum and tremendous void over there both from the White House and I would say the party leadership. I am glad to see the Deal plan is on the floor. A lot of a good aspects on the Deal plan, a lot of good aspects in it and I am looking at it.

Favor H.R. 4 though. It is a bill that offers hope and independence and opportunity for people. I think it is important.

Today I had an opportunity to meet a lady named Felicia Patterson from Savannah, GA. She had been on welfare. She is right now living in public housing and she has now got a job. She is

independent, she is raising three children. She is asking for a little help on something that to my knowledge the Deal plan does not address, H.R. 4 I hope will address in the future. It is something I think both parties ought to come back and work on and that is the subject of rent reform.

You know in a public housing unit when somebody is making money, as Ms. Patterson is, and their income goes up, their rent goes up, so what they find themselves doing is running faster just to stay in place; and in a situation where they get married or the father decides to live at home, they get thrown out completely. Or if, as in Ms. Patterson's case, you have a 16-year-old child who wants to go to work but knows that all of the money is just going to go to additional rent, it is kind of hard on them. We have to make it so that the transition to getting off of public assistance in its entirety is a little bit smoother.

Now the Republican plan has a lot of flexibility. It allows States to work with people like Ms. Patterson and it grants some waivers, and I think stuff like that is important. I will not say it is totally complete. But all of these bills we are going to have to come back. After all, the current welfare system is one of despondency and dependence probably as a result of 40 years of negligence and political payoffs and so forth. We did not get here overnight. We got here slowly. And we are probably going to pull out of this thing slowly.

The thing I do like about the Republican plan is it consolidates 45 different welfare programs into 4 flexible block grants. Anytime I her the idea of eliminating duplication of consolidating Federal programs I get excited, because as a member of the Committee on Appropriations, I cannot tell you, Mr. Speaker, the number of government agencies that come in day after day, doing the exact same thing, but have a little bit different title, and of course it is a tad bit different turf and they are all saying please keep us alive, we are the only agency that can deliver such service. That is not true. The Republican plan consolidates services, it consolidates a number of different things that will free up money by eliminating bureaucrats' jobs and free up money to help create more flexibility to States, and lowers the tax burden for taxpayers so that the private sector can go out and create jobs.

One of the aspects I like about the Republican plan is the idea of requiring work. I think that that is important because we have got to give people the opportunity to end the cycle and become independent, and have that hope that you and I have when we get our paycheck and buy our own car and buy our own food and put a down payment on a House and so forth. I think all of that is very important.

The other thing that I like about it, I am not sure if the moderate Democrat plan addresses it or not, but illegal aliens, one of the problems particularly in California, Texas, and even in Georgia, we have 28,000 illegal aliens. This restricts benefits to illegal aliens. I am sick and tired, as I know my constituents in Georgia are, of going out and earning a living and then seeing a percentage of your paycheck go to people who are illegal aliens who have never paid American taxes and do not even have proper citizenship cards. I am glad to see the Republican Party addressing that.

Stopping the welfare payment and the new benefit for having a baby, we have interviewed people who have said listen, there is in fact to some women out that and some people a motivation to have an additional child if they are going to get paid for it.

These things, Mr. Speaker, are addressed in the Republican plan. I think it is a good plan. We will look at the Deal plan; I think it has some good aspects, but I hope you all will look at ours.

WELFARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida [Mrs. THURMAN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. THURMAN. Mr. Speaker, we have another chart and I am glad to know that the gentleman is looking at the Deal plan because I think that that is very important, because I think it does do many of the things that the gentleman talked about, particularly in simplification, folding in waste, fraud and abuse. We are all trying to meet that same criteria. I think where we really get into the fights is over some of the funding issues and specifically because of some of the entitlement issues.

But I heard some remarks tonight that I really took exception to and that was that some of us may have lost or gotten into the Beltway kind of feeling up here. Let me tell you, I have never done that and I can tell you that the people that work in my office every day are out there helping people every day with problems that they have. So I am going to give you some facts, and some real-life situations, and not just about numbers, first of all, and then I am going to go to the numbers.

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, if the gentlewoman will yield, I will never accuse you of being an inside-of-the-Beltway person because I fly home with you every weekend. I will say this: I hope you tell some of the stories to the leadership in your party who do tend to be a little bit more inside the Beltway than someone like yourself.

Mrs. THURMAN. I think we can all take some credit for that, and I will leave it at that. I want to talk about a man and woman who live in Horsehoe Beach, Thomas and Pam Wright, and they have five children, four of which are of school age. Tom was a long distance truck driver who made $600 to $800 a week. He was diagnosed with diabetes and can no longer be certified as a truck driver and now is working as a security guard, and he makes $200 a week and he is now receiving $230 per month in food stamps. He does not like where he is at, but he does not know what to do if this is cut off.

Danielle Plummer, a 30-year-old single mother living in Holder, FL considered herself lucky because she inherited a 40-year-old A-frame house which was paid for. So she does not have to pay rent anymore. Imagine that.

Miss Plummer recently lost her job at a McDonald's restaurant because she lost her source of transportation and if you know where this area is of Florida, there is no transportation. She receives $212 in food stamps and $214 in AFDC monthly for her 10-year-old daughter. Miss Plummer has been in and out of court fighting for child support and cannot receive benefits owed for her daughter.

□ 2200

She admits welfare is not where she wants to be, nor is it where she plans on remaining. However, when I asked her what she would do if her assistance she now receives was suddenly discontinued, she said, ''I don't know. My God, how would I take care of my daughter?'' Those are real people. Those are people that live in my district.

But in the Deal plan, I was asked to look at some situations as how the purchasing power, and I will admit, you do go up 2 percent for purchasing power for food every year, but what happens is that that power actually goes down. And this is what happens here.

In the Deal plan we keep 102 percent, the safety net, very safety net. This is the package that President Nixon and President Ford worked on, and they said, ''We have got to have a thrifty food plan. We have got to make sure there is a nutritional program out there,'' kind of like we do with food and breakfast and those kinds of things, that very basic nutritional need. What happens is, if you look at what happens traditionally in food prices, they have gone up 3.4 percent every year. In your plan it goes up 2 percent. So what we are doing is we are notching that down every year, and not leaving it so people get good nutritional value. This is what happens.

Deal leaves it 102 percent. Republicans, under H.R. 4, actually, as you see it, it declines. So think about it this way, think about this woman who is on food stamps who has to go to the grocery store next year, because she does not have a job, she is trying, she is trying to do all the right things to raise her daughter, she goes to the grocery store, and now all of a sudden she has got to start pulling food out of the bag, because she cannot afford to keep up with prices as they have increased. It may mean a loaf of bread. It may mean some eggs. It may mean that milk. It may mean one of those basic