children of this Nation. Many of our colleagues from the other side of the aisle know this and they still have time to address the draconian measures contained in the Republican welfare bill.

Good programs that work, that have bipartisan support, are being sacrificed under the guise of efficiency and savings. For example, the School Lunch Program has no guaranteed funding level in this bill, contrary to current law. Governors and State bureaucrats may assign only 80 percent of the funds of the block grant for school meals and will be able to divert up to 20 percent to other welfare programs. This may lead to the neglect of legitimate and vital nutrition needs for our children.

The concept of block grants is being sold as a panacea for all the ills related to welfare. The Republicans claim that administrative costs and bureaucracy will be cut by block granting programs. In fact, the Republican bill actually increases bureaucracy. Under current law, the administrative cap on the child nutrition programs—except WIC—is 1.8 percent. The proposed block grant increases such costs to 2 percent and adds another layer of State bureaucracy, charged now with even determining the immigration status of children.

The cuts to nutrition programs for children are real. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that this bill cuts $7 billion in the next 5 years. To add insult to injury, the so-called savings will be used to finance tax cuts, subsidies, and perks for wealthy individuals and corporations. The Republican admit that these moneys are not geared toward deficit reduction but will go to pay for their special tax package, which will cost America over $180 billion in the next 5 years. The cost is even higher when we take into consideration the harm this bill can inflict in programs that truly help our children.

Beginning in October, the start of the fiscal year, the School Lunch Program will suffer a cut of over $140 million forcing approximately 503,000 needy children out of the program. This is only the tip of the iceberg, more children will be either forced out or underserved in years to come.

In my district, Puerto Rico, just as everywhere else in the Nation, the school breakfast and lunch programs have been excellent programs for many years. I assure you that healthy children equate with healthy minds. Feeding our students mean that they are ready and able to learn. As I have stated before, this is a simple premise, but it is a premise that has worked well since the original School Lunch Program was signed into law in 1946.

As a former mayor and Governor, I believe that it is a shame to destroy such a successful program. I have grave reservations about the effectiveness of a system of block grants where vitally necessary nutrition programs are forced to compete against each other for increasingly scarce dollars. Local officials will have to juggle powerful local interests which will affect the distribution of the funds available under this massive block grant.

In Puerto Rico, for instance, the reduction of $129 million less in Federal funding for nutrition assistance programs in the next 5 years, would limit our children's access to this important program, severely risking our children's nutrition and health.

There are many children in school in Puerto Rico who, unfortunately, must depend on the school nutrition program. Remember, Mr. Speaker, that these children can't vote and have no way to defend themselves in this welfare war. No student in Puerto Rico or elsewhere in the United States deserves to go to school hungry or suffer from malnutrition. Taking school lunches and breakfasts away from children will result in more children falling further behind because children simply don't learn as well when they are hungry.

Don't cut the school lunch program and other important nutrition programs. Don't continue expensive and inefficient corporate welfare programs and tax subsidies for wealthy corporations at the expense of our children's physical and emotional health. We need true welfare reform that helps people—not this mean-spirited Contract With America proposal that threatens our children, the handicapped, the poor, and the elderly.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. LOWEY].

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague.

Mr. Speaker, we all agree that reform of the welfare system is long overdue. The current system is costing billions and not solving the problem. It does not put people to work but instead has created an unhealthy cycle of dependency. But this bill does nothing to improve the welfare system so that children in poor families can themselves be successful and avoid a cycle of dependency. It does not make welfare work for children by moving their parents into work—rather, it would hurt children by moving their parents off the welfare rolls and onto the streets.

Let me outline the effect the majority's bill would have on children in New York: Over the next 5 years, 24,240 children would lose access to child care; 16,592 children would lose access to assistance and medical services under the SSI Program; 477,000 children living in poverty would lose cash assistance by the year 2000; in 1996, some 8,500 children would no longer receive assistance to buy school lunches.

Mr. Speaker, the majority's bill will not work for children and their families. That's why we support a bill that promotes work—and works for children.

Welfare to work—not welfare to nowhere.

WELFARE RESPONSIBILITY

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

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. GREENWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I simply want to quickly respond to two previous speakers. The gentlewoman from Connecticut made reference to cuts in the School Lunch Program in her State. Actually under our proposal Connecticut will receive more than $3 million over what they received in this year's allotment.

The gentlewoman from New York also referenced reductions. We will actually increase funding under the Republican proposal by $29.78 million in the State of New York. So this discussion of cuts in the School Lunch Programs is pure mythology.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I would like to read a poem that I read earlier today, because we are hearing an awful lot about children in this discussion, and I think in some respects the children are being used in this debate as pawns in a much larger play.

But I would like to read a poem from Bill Bennett's ''Book of Virtues.'' It is entitled ''The Bridge Builder.'' I read it earlier today, and would like to read it again.

''An old man, going a lone highway,
Came, at the evening, cold and gray,
To a chasm, vast, and deep, and wide,
Through which was flowing a sullen tide.
The old man crossed in the twilight dim;
The sullen stream had no fears for him;
But he turned, when safe on the other side,
And built a bridge to span the tide.
''Old man,'' said a fellow pilgrim, near,
''You are wasting strength with building here;
Your journey will end with the ending day;
You never again must pass this way;
You have crossed the chasm, deep and wide—
Why build you the bridge at the eventide?''
The builder lifted his old gray head:
''Good friend, in the path I have come,'' he said,
''There followeth after me today
A youth, whose feet must pass this way.
This chasm, that has been naught to me,
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be.
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;
Good friend, I am building the bridge for him.'''

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about welfare reform, when we talk about reforming the way business has been done in Washington, when we talk about balancing the budget, what we are really talking about is saving the American dream for future generations. This is not some mean-spirited accounting exercise. It is serious business. Because right now when we talk about the children, what we are doing to the children, the truth of the matter is, and I think everyone here knows this, we are saddling our kids with a debt that they will not be able to pay off. The President's own advisors last year said if the Congress does not do

something about this, by the time our children reach middle age they will be confronted with a tax rate of 82 percent just to finance the debt and social programs. Since Congress did nothing last year, the President came forward this year and slipped under our desk a note that said we are now talking about 84 percent.

So when we talk about what we are doing to the children, I think we also have to look at what we are doing to the children of the next generation when they become of age. It is just simply wrong.

In 1994 as we were told earlier, President Lyndon Johnson declared war on poverty. I think it is time that we as a Congress take a look around and count the casualties. Fortunately, or unfortunately for us, we do not have to go very far from this Capitol to see many of the casualties. As a matter of fact, if you walk about 10 blocks in any direction from the U.S. Capitol, you will see those casualties. You will see the hopelessness. You will see the despair. You will see the ingrained poverty which we have created.

I want to read a quote, and I think it is so good and it says so much.

> By intervening directly in depriving society of its responsibility, the social assistance state leads to a loss of human energies and an inordinate increase of public agencies which are dominated more by bureaucratic ways of thinking than by concern for serving their clients and which are accompanied by an enormous increase in spending.

It was not me who said that, it was not NEWT GINGRICH who said that; it was Pope John Paul II, and he was absolutely right. The social welfare system created by Federal bureaucracies simply does not work. The tragedy of our welfare system in part is that it is costing too much money, and we are burdening our kids with a debt they will never be able to pay off.

But the real tragedy of their inalienable rights to use their God-given talents. We are with the perverse incentives of the welfare system today creating a system that creates dependency.

We have perverse incentives within the system. Children raised in families who receive welfare are three times more likely to be on welfare when they become adults. This system just simply is broke, and tinkering around the edges is not going to solve it.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are way out in front of us on this issue. They demand welfare reform. They want it this year. Thankfully, I think we are going to give it to them finally.

DO NOT CHANGE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

The SPEAKER Pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. BROWN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, all of us agree the welfare system needs major changes, but I have not met anybody in my district, students parents, teachers, school administrators, cafeteria workers, that think that we need to radically change the school lunch program.

Earlier this week I visited Tennyson Elementary School in Sheffield Lake, OH, east of where I live in Lorain County. I was taken around this wonderful little school by a couple of young men, 9-year-olds, third graders, named Will Emery and Zach Russell. I also met with Jennifer, Kelly, and Sarah Ward, three sisters at the school, and lots of other children; Mrs. Urmston, the principal, some people on the school board, administrators, and others.

It is clear. Every one of them said:

> Do not mess with the school lunch program. It works. We do not want any changes in the school lunch program.

Unfortunately, Republicans in this radical proposal do not see it the same way in their move toward their extremism.

□ 2045

I would like to put on this board, add to this board what the school lunch cuts will mean in Ohio, another 13,400 children will lose their school lunches as a result of this Republican extremism.

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. I yield to the gentleman from Ohio.

Mr. HOKE. Have you seen this CRS report?

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. I have seen it. Every speaker that comes up uses the CRS report.

Mr. HOKE. We are both from Ohio. We both care about Ohio. It shows that there is an increase in funding for school nutrition programs, school lunch, $11,500,000, 1996 over 1995. Why are we not on the same page with this?

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Every teacher, every PTA, every group out there, every organization, every individual that knows about this understands the mean-spiritedness of these cuts. You claim $7 billion in savings on the one hand so you can score for your tax cuts for your wealthiest constituents on the west side of Cleveland, and yet, on the other hand, you are saying ''we are not making any cuts.''

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman would from New York [Ms. SLAUGHTER].

Ms. SLAUGHTER. I thank the gentleman for yielding. I want to get in on this a little bit, too. The fact of the matter is that the block grant program, with some increase, is really the amount of children right now in the State that requires nutritional help. If there are more, as one of my colleagues has said earlier, it is like counting up to 100 and saying the rest of you are out of luck.

It does not take into account any recession. It does not take into account the fact that 20 percent of that block grant can be used for anything in the world that the State wants to use it for, even to build a bridge, if they like.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. If the economy goes bad in a certain area, there are a lot of parents laid off, those school lunches will not be increased for those kids.

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Correct. There is nothing more coming from here. Nothing more will come from here. The States, there is nothing in the world to make the States do anything, including putting people to work. As a matter of fact, the Republican head of the Congressional Budget Office said just today that there was not a single state in the union that was going to meet the goal of putting people to work that is in this contract. That is the Republican CBO director. That is the word we got from him today.

We are trying, on our side, to get people back to work. We do not think that just after the amount of time that you can spend on welfare is up and you are thrown out in the street, we do not consider that success. We look at success in getting somebody to a job that they badly need and they badly want.

The Republican bill does not do any of that. It simply gives you the amount of time. If there are more children that need food than the block grant allows for, tough.

Now, if we can feed children in Somalia, we can feed people in the United States.

I yield back to the gentleman from Ohio, after I stick this on New York, 7800 children in my district alone will go without lunch.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Reclaiming my time, we will see, instead of running the School Lunch Program the way it has been run for 49 years to the satisfaction of almost every one in this country, we will turn it over to 50 State bureaucracies.

We will lose the power buying, if you will, and some of the savings that way, particularly in the WIC program, where infant formula will cost as much as $1 billion more, several groups have estimated, because we will lose competitive bidding. We will end up in a situation where we have programs that work and instead we may turn them into programs that do not work.

If something is working, certainly the welfare needs reform, but something like the School Lunch Program standing alone works. I see no reason to change it.

MORE ON THE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

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

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the distinguished gentleman from Ohio, [Mr. HOKE].

Mr. HOKE. I thank my friend from Illinois. I just have to point out that each time we see one of these little