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Senate

The Senate was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Monday, June 3, 1996, at 1:30 p.m.

House of Representatives

FRIDAY, MAY 31, 1996

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore [Mr. LAHOOD].

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 31, 1996.

I hereby designate the Honorable RAY LAHOOD to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NEWT GINGRICH,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

Be with us, O God, all the day long, and may Your mercies ever surround us. May we never leave the brightness of Your presence, and may the glory of Your blessings touch us in all we do. Be with us this day, and may the bounty of Your glory bless every person, now and evermore. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. MONTGOMERY] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. MONTGOMERY led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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

[Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California [Ms. WATERS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. WATERS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

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

[Mr. FILNER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

WHO'S FOR KIDS AND WHO'S JUST KIDDING?

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

Mrs. SCHROEDER. Mr. Speaker, I came to talk about what the gentleman from California, Mr. GEORGE MILLER, and I did yesterday. Mr. MILLER and I were both Chairs of the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families. That select committee is now gone. It has been put away. But when the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families was alive, it was a vigorous watchdog for children and for family votes.

Yesterday the gentleman from California [Mr. MILLER] and I decided that in the spirit of what is happening this weekend in Washington, with tens of thousands of people coming to Washington tomorrow for the Stand for Children Rally, that we would look at the votes of the 104th Congress and rank the top 10 that would help children. Yesterday we released our report. We called it, ''Who's for Kids and Who's Just Kidding?''

The reason that we emphasized that is no Member of Congress has ever gotten elected saying they hate kids, and yet when you look at the votes, it comes out very differently. That is partly because we do not have a watchdog here anymore on these different

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Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

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votes pointing out the difference, and so people can kind of plaster over their votes with wonderful photo ops, with warm, fuzzy children and puppy dogs, and they can also give great speeches and rhetoric on family values, and then vote the other way when no one is looking.

We put everybody on notice that we are going to continue monitoring this through the election, because what has really happened is that America's parents and teachers and aunts and uncles and people like myself, who really feel we should be voting based on our children's future, want these voting records, but we are also busy. We feel like hamsters in the wheel, where we run at 100 miles an hour. We run faster and faster every year, and at the end of the year our tongues are hanging out and we are really tired, and we never got out of the bottom of the wheel, and the last thing we have time to do is comb the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD for an entire 2 years looking for votes on kids.

We are going to keep doing this. We were shocked when we looked at what has happened in this 104th Congress. It is no wonder so many tens of thousands of people are coming. These issues had traditionally had a very strong bipartisan coalition working on them. Yet, this year we see all sorts of programs that have never been controversial before put on the chopping block because they say, oh, well, we need money for the debt.

Let me tell the Members, 5-year-olds did not cause the debt; 3-year-olds did not cause the debt. Why in the world are we balancing the budget on their backs, when we turn around and put $13 billion more in defense than even the Joint Chiefs asked for? That does not seem fair to me.

Mr. Speaker, the other reason they have been cutting kids is they say they need the money for tax cuts. Who do the tax cuts go to? They go to the richest people in this country. I think that is unfair, too. Why should kids have to give to those who already have so much?

I was a little horrified yesterday when the Republican conference came out to our press conference and handed out this report saying that they are fighting the welfare state to save our children from poverty. They had that in a box. There is the issue: ''Our Children.'' They mean their children and their family.

My question is, What do you do about the American child that is in poverty? Is that not one of our children, too? I would hope legislators think of our children and America's children. They are certainly America's future. The fact that we would be cutting that out and just saying, oh, no, no, you should have picked better parents, too bad, it is not our problem; I think that is wrong.

Basically, because kids cannot vote, they are a very easy target. Some of the things that have been done is we absolutely zeroed out all after-school and summer programs for kids. I find that shocking. We slashed away at the lunch program. They will tell you, ''Yes, we increased it,'' but we did not increase it enough to have the same allocation for the number of children there. We have more children coming in and they did not increase it nearly enough, so I guess something gets removed from the plate. Maybe they do not get potatoes, maybe they do not get meat. I do not know. We cut basic education, Head Start. We cut out all sorts of other things.

I know my time is up, but we are going to stay on this, because we think this is the most important thing we can do. If we do not care about our kids, this country is not going to survive. So who is for kids and who is just kidding? We are going to tell you.

IN SUPPORT OF THE CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND: STAND FOR CHILDREN

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Children's Defense Fund's Stand for Children, which took place at the Lincoln Memorial on Saturday. I stand with Marian Wright Edelman, the Children's Defense Fund, and all of the American families and children rallied. According to a recent report released last month by the Department of Health and Human Services, the percentage of children in extreme poverty—with a family income less than half the official poverty level—has doubled since 1975; it now stands at 10 percent or 6.3 million children. One in every five children in the United States live in poverty. On a typical day in the United States, 8,490 children are reported abused or neglected and 3 die of that abuse. Every day an average of 790 babies are born underweight, 2,660 are born into families whose income falls below Federal poverty levels and 3,398 are born to unmarried mothers. In 1992, there were 850,000 substantiated cases of child abuse or neglect, while the homicide rate for teens more than doubled between 1970 and 1992.

What will the future hold, if a generation of young people are being raised without guidance, in poverty, and in fear of crime? What have we done in Congress to support and stand for children? We must focus on devoting Federal resources for education and crime prevention.

A recent Time/CNN Poll found that 73 percent of those polled favored having more of their tax dollars go to programs that benefit the young. However, the majority in Congress have been attempting to cut programs targeted for children.

We speak so often in this House about family values and protecting children. At the same time however, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, recently presented a budget package that will effectively eliminate the Federal guarantee of assistance for poor children in this country for the first time in 60 years.

The majority's plan is antifamily and anti-child. It calls for unprecedented cuts in programs serving children and would remove the basic protections for hungry, abused, disabled, and poor children while using the savings to offset tax breaks for wealthy individuals.

The Republican plan folds 20 separate child protection programs into two block grants at a time when GAO and others report current resources are failing to keep pace with the needs of a national child protection system in crisis. Under this plan, funds could be inadequate to respond to rapidly increasing reports of abuse and neglect, and insufficient to protect abused children and find them safe, loving and permanent adoptive homes. The plan potentially guts accountability for State child protection systems, over 20 of which are operating under court mandates for failing to provide adequate service to abused and neglected children.

The Republican budget assumes a more strict definition of disability for children and the creation of a two-tiered system of benefits for children. Eligible children who require personal care assistance and who, without such assistance, would require specialized care outside the home receive 100 percent of the Federal SSI benefit. However, children with disabilities who do not meet this personal care assistance test receive 75 percent of the SSI benefit amount. This system could result in a large majority of disabled children having their benefits reduced—children with disabilities such as cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, muscular dystrophy, cystic fibrosis, and AIDS.

The Republican plan would also deny most Federal, State, and local benefits, including school lunch, to illegal aliens and would deny SSI and food stamps to legal aliens until they become citizens.

The Republican budget fails to provide adequate resources for work programs and child care which are critical to effectuate a transition from welfare to work. The Republican plan significantly increases the need for child care while reducing the resources for child care services as well as the funds available to States to improve the quality of care.

This strategy of welfare-to-work is doomed to fail. Mandatory welfare-to-work programs can get parents off welfare and into jobs, but only if the program is well designated and is given the resources to be successful. The GOP plan is punitive and wrong-headed. It will not put people to work, it will put them on the street. Any restructuring of the welfare system must move people away from dependency toward self-sufficiency. Facilitating the transition off welfare requires job training, guaranteed child care, and health insurance at an affordable price.

We cannot expect to reduce our welfare rolls if we do not provide the women of this Nation the opportunity to better themselves and their families through job training and education, if we do not provide them with good quality child care and most importantly if we do not provide them with a job.

Together, welfare programs make up the safety net that poor children and their families rely on in times of need. We must not allow the safety net to be shredded. We must keep our promises to the children of this Nation. We must ensure that in times of need they receive the health care, food and general services they need to survive.

The Republican budget resolution also proposes to cut the earned income tax credit [EITC] by $20 billion over the next 7 years. This cut includes eliminating the EITC for childless workers as well as families with children who have modest incomes. In fact, over 6 million families with children could receive a reduction in their EITC.

This program was designed to assist the working poor of America who the Republicans argue that in exchange for losing the earned income tax credit, many low-income families would receive the $500 per child tax credit. The fact of the matter, however, is that the children's tax credit will not benefit 34 percent of the Nation's children because they live in families that are ineligible because their income is too low.

Stand for Children was a national day for all of us to demonstrate a commitment to children, to celebrate our future, and to work together for community renewal. I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to continue to support this very important effort.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. MONTGOMERY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. WATERS, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. FILNER, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, for 5 minutes, today.

Mrs. SCHROEDER, for 5 minutes, today.

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

By unanimous consent, permission to revise and extend remarks was granted to:

(The following Member (at the request of Mr. MONTGOMERY) and to include extraneous matter:)

Mr. YATES.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MONTGOMERY. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 9 minutes a.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until Tuesday, June 4, 1996, at 12:30 p.m. for morning hour debates.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. MCCOLLUM: Committee on the Judiciary. H.R. 2650. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to eliminate certain sentencing inequities for drug offenders; with an amendment (Rept. 104–602). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 4 of rule XXII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions as follows:

H.R. 326: Mr. WELDON of Florida.

H.R. 2939: Mr. HAMILTON.

H.R. 2976: Mr. LATHAM.

H.R. 3379: Mr. SMITH of Michigan.