

13, 20-year-old Kevin Pridgen stood outside a neighbor's house on Glenn Road in Durham, NC, in my district, just visiting like many folks do on Sunday afternoon. In an instant, after he had been there just briefly, after 15 rounds were fired by an assault rifle, Kevin Pridgen lay in critical condition with a gunshot wound to the stomach, a victim of a drive-by shooting two doors from his own home.

The alleged shooter in this terrible crime is reported to have been a 17-year-old juvenile whom police arrested and charged with assault with intent to kill. Sadly, episodes like this outrageous crime are no longer rare events but are increasingly part of the everyday routine in communities all across this country.

Over the past several weeks I have taken the opportunity to meet with police officials in Durham and across my district to discuss these disturbing trends. Our brave law enforcement officers put their lives on the line every day in service to the public interest.

They described to me the frightening details, the dangers they and the general public face with sharply increasing rates of violent juvenile crime. North Carolina's finest tell me that the juveniles involved in these crimes are younger than ever, while the seriousness of their crimes has never been worse.

Statistics tell us that, despite the fact that overall violent crime in America is on the decline, youth violence is increasing. In fact, the latest numbers in my State show that overall violent crime is down by 5 percent, but youth violent crime is up by 6 percent.

According to the criminal justice experts, they have projected that the demographic changes will increase the problems of violent crime of young people in record numbers in the coming decade.

□ 1245

We must act now to protect our citizens today and address the long-term problems that are to come. I met with law enforcement officials across my district, sheriffs, police chiefs, small-town cops, juvenile detention officials and youth service providers. The message I received from these officials and from ordinary citizens comes through loud and clear: We must take aggressive action to stem the growing tide of violent juvenile crime, we must crack down on the most egregious offenders, and we must equip local law enforcement and youth services to meet the variety of challenges of our juvenile justice system. We must support Boys' and Girls' Clubs, YMCA's and other efforts to give our young people a positive alternative to the bleak choice of the streets. We must have a balanced approach of tough and smart efforts to deal with the complex and growing problem.

Mr. Speaker, the American people desperately need leadership from this Congress on serious issues like juvenile

crime. The voters of North Carolina sent me to the people's House to help provide that leadership. I call on my colleagues to join on a bipartisan basis to fulfill that mission, in the name of Kevin Pridgen and all our citizens who look to us for leadership to address the urgent issues that confront us in America.

TEXAS WELFARE REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore [Mr. BILLEY]. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Texas, Mr. SAM JOHNSON, is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, let us get the facts straight on Texas welfare reform. In the spring of 1995, the Texas legislature passed State welfare reform. In July of 1996, Texas tried to implement its welfare reform and sent a proposal to Health and Human Services. In April this year, 1997, still no answer from HHS. And guess who is holding it up? The President of the United States.

The State of Texas simply wants to enter into a public-private partnership to streamline, integrate and consolidate its welfare system into a one-stop center. This will not only help welfare recipients, but save taxpayer dollars. It is a forward-looking proposal that would take 21 different State and Federal programs and combine them into one.

No longer would welfare recipients have to go from agency to agency to sign up and receive benefits. It is one-stop shopping to receive all the help they need. It has been estimated that this would save Texas taxpayers over \$10 million a month, or \$120 million a year. That is enough money to provide additional health care to an additional 150,000 children in Texas each year.

Welfare reform in Texas has been stalled out because the President has been taken hostage by the labor unions. Labor bigwigs see any type of reform as antiunion regardless of whether it helps children or not.

The President appears to be losing support for his delay from his own Cabinet members. An April 4 memo to the President from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the President's head of domestic policy states,

We must give Texas an answer immediately. The State has engaged in good-faith discussions with various agencies for 9 months.

It is now 10 months. It has been nearly a month since that memo, and still no answer. The reason the unions are holding the President hostage are illustrated in this memo. There is a chart at the bottom that lists three options. The first is the Texas proposal. The second is "the union proposal." And the third is the proposed administration compromise.

I was not aware and I am sure most Americans are not aware that welfare

reform signed by President Clinton called for union approval of State welfare proposals. Since when do unions get to submit proposals on State welfare programs? I guess since they spent millions of dollars helping the President get reelected maybe.

It has also been reported that the Secretary of HHS was ready to release a letter of approval to Texas but was stopped short by the President. The request is now reportedly sitting on the Vice President's desk. What in the world is it doing there? We are all concerned that the administration is not worried about our children or how the program will help them; they are worried about the political relationship with the unions.

I think we all took the President at his word during the signing ceremony for the welfare reform bill last year when he said, "After I sign my name to this bill, welfare will no longer be a political issue."

What happened to that promise? If the administration puts the union's political agenda above the real concerns of the citizens of Texas, we will not hesitate to go forward with legislation to give Texas the approval it deserves.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for the President to do what is right. Many States are watching so they can make the same kind of commonsense changes to their welfare systems. The President should grant approval immediately so Texas and all of America can make welfare reform real and help the children and needy families in America.

INVESTIGATION OF ILLEGAL FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BURTON] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to discuss with my colleagues serious issues which have come up in the investigation that Congress has launched into illegal fund-raising activities.

In the past few days, the White House has blurred the issues by claiming to have fully complied with our request for relevant documents. This is just not true, Mr. Speaker. The Committee on Government Reform and Oversight has not received all subpoenaed records, and the White House counsel has indicated that the President will be asserting executive privilege over an unspecified amount of documents.

The American people have a right to know. After weeks of seemingly good-faith negotiations with the White House lawyers in which the committee prioritized its request, the White House refuses to provide all documents to the committee. For weeks the White House counsel said documents would be forthcoming once a document protocol was adopted, yet the committee's April 10 adoption of a document protocol was met with continued White House resistance.