

The City of Española will have a fiesta in July to commemorate the actual arrival of the Spanish into the area. Santa Fe, Las Vegas, Taos, Socorro, Aztec, Albuquerque, and other New Mexico towns and cities will be holding such special events as fiestas, historic reenactments, a State Fair Pageant, a historic Spanish costume ball, and parades. Seminars and lectures will abound.

State Fair pageant plans include a reenactment of De Vargas' reentry into New Mexico, a review of the Pueblo Revolt and its ramifications, life under the American flag during the middle to late 1800's, and a patriotic tribute to all Hispanics who have fought for the United States. This reentry spectacular will be performed twice before large New Mexico State Fair audiences. It will also be televised.

This resolution also asks the President to issue a proclamation declaring 1998 is a year to commemorate the arrival of Hispanics and celebrate their growth in importance in our nation's culture and economy.

This Senate resolution calls upon the people of the United States to support, promote, and participate in the many *Oñate Cuartocentenario* activities being planned to commemorate the historic event of the first Spanish settlement in the Southwest Region of the United States.

Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to support Senate Resolution 148, designating 1998 as the "*Oñate Cuartocentenario*" to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the first Spanish settlement in New Mexico.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Madam President, I rise to speak about Senate Resolution 148, designating 1998 as the "*Oñate Cuatro-centenario*," the anniversary commemoration of the first Spanish settlement in New Mexico. First, I thank my colleague from New Mexico, Senator DOMENICI with whom I have the great pleasure of marking this anniversary. And I thank my Senate colleagues for co-sponsoring the resolution. The bi-partisan support for this resolution I believe is indicative of the broad understanding and appreciation for the cultural contributions that Hispanics have made in our American society.

This resolution commemorates one of the most meaningful and significant dates of both New Mexico and American history. July 1, 1598 stands out in history because it was on that day, almost 180 years before the Declaration of Independence was signed in Philadelphia, that a small group of Spanish pioneers ventured north from Mexico, up the Rio Grande Valley and settled in what is now North-Central New Mexico. The settlers, led by Don Juan de Oñate, established a small mission at the confluence of the Rio Chama and the Rio Grande and next to an Indian Pueblo the inhabitants called "Ohke." The Spanish settlers named their mission San Gabriel de los Espanoles.

From San Gabriel, Spanish families moved outward and, in 1610 established

the mission of "La Villa Real de Santa Fe", now well-known as "Santa Fe." Other settlements were soon established throughout the Rio Grande Valley, Arizona, California, Colorado, and Texas following the long-established settlements in Florida.

As much as this resolution commemorates the early Spanish settlements on this continent, it is meant to do much more. This resolution celebrates the Hispanic people themselves and the many contributions they have made to the history of this continent and this country over the last 400 years.

Indeed, many Hispanics have earned a place in American history. During the American Revolution, Bernardo de Galvez, a Spanish aristocrat and governor of the Spanish province of Louisiana, was instrumental in helping defeat the British navy and army near the Gulf of Mexico.

During the Civil War, David Glasgow Farragut, also of Spanish descent, commanded a Union naval expedition against the city of New Orleans. Because of his leadership at the battle for Fort Jackson, President Lincoln promoted Farragut to Rear Admiral.

Hispanics have made significant contributions also in the area of Science. Luis Alvarez, for example, won the Nobel Prize for Physics. Alvarez taught at University of California-Berkeley and was later instrumental in the development of radar at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In 1944, he went to work on the development of the atomic bomb in Los Alamos, New Mexico.

Of course, I cannot speak of distinguished Hispanics without speaking of New Mexico's own Dennis Chavez, whom many of my Senate colleagues no doubt remember well. Dennis Chavez was one of eight children and through hard work and determination became one of New Mexico's distinguished Congressmen in 1934. Not long after that, he became United States Senator, and while in the Senate worked tirelessly for fair employment and civil rights legislation.

Madam President, I easily can point to all aspects of our American society, from literature to sports, and identify many Hispanic individuals who have made significant contributions. It is a tremendous history—indeed, more than 400 years of history. Through this resolution, I wish to help New Mexico and our Nation celebrate that history. Thank you, Madam President.

Mr. DOMENICI. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. KENNEDY. I suggest the absence of a quorum, with the time to be charged equally.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WELLSTONE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to speak for 15 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WELLSTONE. I thank the Chair.

#### WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH WELFARE REFORM?

Mr. WELLSTONE. Madam President, there were two articles today, one article in the New York Times, a front page story: "Pessimism Retains Grip on Region Shaped by War on Poverty," Booneville, KY, eastern Kentucky, Appalachia. At the same time, there was also an editorial in the Minnesota Star Tribune. I ask unanimous consent that both the New York Times piece and this editorial be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

(From the Minneapolis Star Tribune)

#### STATES MUST ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

From Maine to California, governors are celebrating a plunge in the nation's welfare rolls. Some 2 million families have gone off benefits since 1994, and caseloads have fallen to their lowest level in 27 years. But few officials are asking what seems an obvious question: What became of these families after they left public assistance?

That's exactly the question posed by seven Midwestern welfare administrators who have banded together in implementing the landmark 1996 federal welfare-reform law. The seven, including Ann Sessoms of Minnesota's Department of Human Services, recently traveled to Washington, D.C., to unveil a new framework for measuring the success of state welfare experiments. They're asking the right questions, and they deserve support from the Clinton administration and their colleagues.

Once upon a time, the fate of families leaving welfare might have been an afterthought. The system was self-regulating, in that clients who fell on hard times after leaving public assistance could simply re-apply. Cash assistance to families, known as AFDC, was an "entitlement"—if you fell below certain poverty thresholds, you were entitled to benefits.

But since Congress passed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996, better known as welfare reform, that self-regulating feature has vanished. States can kick families off assistance for many reasons—failing to find work, breaking administrative rules, or simply exhausting their benefits "clock," a time limit as short as 18 months in some states.

The federal law requires states to submit lots of data on the number of clients who receive benefits and who find jobs, but it is almost silent on the issue of family well-being after clients leave welfare. As federal bureaucrats draft new reporting requirements, there's a danger that Washington and the governors will define "success" as merely cutting caseloads.

Sessoms and her colleagues have a more robust definition. They'd like to know if clients are earning enough money to rise out of poverty, if they're finding safe day care, whether their children are seeing a doctor and attending school, whether marriages are

holding together or breaking apart. Minnesota's Department of Human Services has decided to track many of these questions for its own clients. But the nation needs comparable measurements, so that governors have the right incentives and so Washington can compare results of the 50 state welfare experiments.

This is an ambitious, even intrusive, list of questions. But then, these were the very questions that prompted welfare reform in the first place. It's worth remembering that Congress didn't tackle welfare reform because caseloads were rising—they were already falling by 1996. It wasn't because assistance costs were climbing—cash welfare to families has been stable at less than 2 percent of the federal budget since Richard Nixon was in office. It was because welfare was seen as a failed program that fostered other social pathologies: idleness, drug use, broken marriages and neglected children. Having blamed welfare for these problems, it seems only fair to find out whether welfare reform is solving them.

[From the New York Times, Feb. 9, 1998]

PESSIMISM RETAINS GRIP ON APPALACHIAN POOR

(By Michael Janofsky)

There is an area of Booneville that some residents call Ho Chi Minh City for its third world appearance. It is not large, just a few winding gravel roads. But many of the houses look like shanties, heated with wood or coal. Children walk around with dirty bare feet. Many people lack telephones and cars.

In many respects, this little corner of Appalachia looks much as it did 30 years ago, when President Lyndon B. Johnson declared a war on poverty, taking special aim at the rural decay in places like Owsley County, here in eastern Kentucky, and other distressed areas in the 399 counties of 13 states that make up Appalachia.

Federal and state agencies have plowed billions of dollars into Appalachia through economic development programs, highway construction and job-creation initiatives to help residents overcome the economic and psychological isolation caused by poverty and the rugged terrain.

But a tour of Booneville offers ample evidence that money and countless programs have had only marginal effects on breaking a cycle of poverty and despair that continues throughout many parts of Appalachia. And conditions could grow worse before they improve.

With state welfare regulations forcing recipients to find work and with the Federal Government reviewing the eligibility of children who receive disability benefits, many Owsley County residents could lose vital monthly checks that they have relied on for years. More than half of the people in the county who receive those benefits are children.

Viewing those prospects, some residents sound much like people who have criticized entitlement programs for stagnating inner cities.

"The war on poverty was the worst thing that ever happened to Appalachia," said Denise Hoffman, 46, who runs a small farm here with her husband, Neil. "It gave people a way to get by without having to do any work."

By many measures, Appalachia remains mired in poverty. In about one-quarter of the highland region's counties, according to data from the 1990 census, 25 percent or more of residents live below the poverty level as defined by the Federal Government. That rate is nearly double the national average.

Owsley County, with a population of 5,400, is one of the most distressed areas. To many

residents, the booming national economy is something they hear about only on television.

More than 46 percent live in poverty, as defined by the Government. The median household income of \$8,595 is one of the lowest in Appalachia. Almost half of the adults are unemployed. About two-thirds of the people in the county receive Federal assistance, 30 percent of county families do not have telephones, and 20 percent do not have cars.

More than half the adult population is illiterate.

But perhaps most critical of all, with the coal industry long gone as a major employer and job creation minimal and sporadic, feelings of hopelessness have become so deeply entrenched that many residents have long forsaken any expectation of bettering themselves.

Even a generous new program to encourage savings is struggling to win participants. Through a foundation grant to finance a \$6-to-\$1 match, residents can deposit up to \$15 a month for two years, a total of \$360, and receive back \$2,520. The program began in May to encourage low-income people to set aside money for home improvements, a new business or school.

Eight people are participating.

"The overriding theory of the program works against the mentality that is deeply set within people who live in poverty," said the program administrator, Jennifer Hart. "They don't think they have a future. If they did, they would think about it and delay instant gratification. But they have no reason to. And they can't. They can only think about how they are going to feed the children this week and pay the rent this month."

Even many of the 70 seniors at Owsley County High School this year sense the inevitability of spending their lives in poverty, unchanged from their parents' situations.

The Hoffmans' 17-year-old daughter, Megan, a top student and an athlete who has been accepted to four state colleges, thinks of her classmates with chagrin.

"Many of them think things are never going to get any better," she said. "It's pretty sad. Kids feel, 'I don't think I can make a difference.' They don't seem to want to change or care."

When the senior class voted on the message to print on their T-shirts this year, an annual custom, they chose: "I came, I slept, I graduated." Megan said fewer than 25 percent plan to attend college.

As elsewhere in Appalachia, the feelings of hopelessness prevail despite energetic efforts by Government and private groups like the Mountain Association for Community Economic Development, a 21-year-old organization in Berea that helps community groups in 49 counties around the state.

In Owsley it provides a ray of hope through self-help programs like job-training classes, courses on starting a business and agencies that make low-interest loans. It also aids in recruiting companies into the area, a mighty challenge in Booneville, with its remote location and lack of services. The town has two restaurants, three groceries and one dentist. And while it has three doctors the nearest hospital is an hour away.

To attack the worse of rural poverty, the association created "action teams" six years ago for the most distressed counties, Owsley and Letcher. In each, officials work closely with local leaders to convince residents that they can lead more productive lives.

The efforts take many forms. In Booneville, the team helped bring Image Entry, a data-entry company that created 58 jobs, onto a site that local leaders hope will become an industrial park. Team members helped start associations for goat breeders and vegetable growers, to increase their prof-

its. The team also helped set up a second-hand shop that employs welfare recipients so that they can fulfill new state regulations that require them to find a job in two years or lose benefits. Next to the shop is a credit union that offers low-interest loans and a generous matched-savings program.

The state welfare agency has set up a pilot program for recipients that teaches "job readiness skills," including how to write a resume and how to fill out a job application.

Yet every initiative pits the action team and Government agencies against an intractable pessimism built on decades of depressed conditions that are visible everywhere: piles of garbage heaped into creeks and ravines because people cannot afford the \$12 monthly fee for trash removal; landscapes of rusting cars, some from the 1950's, and the crumbling shell of the Seale theater, which last showed a movie, "Silver Bullet," in 1985.

But many residents say the prevailing attitude in the county, particularly among those receiving state and Federal entitlement benefits, is that no amount of help and instruction is going to make a difference. According to the most recent state statistics, 14.3 percent of Owsley residents receive welfare benefits, 20 percent receive benefits through the Federal assistance program for disabled people known as Supplemental Security Income and almost half receive food stamps.

Mr. Hoffman, 47, a member of the action team, grew almost angry, talking about the conditions in much of Appalachia. "Poverty is not about money," he said. "It's in the mind. It's a way of life. Once you're in that cycle you think you can't break out of it. I don't know why people think that way, but they become a prisoner of it. It took us three generations to get into this mess, and it's going to take us three generations to get out of it."

Members of the team say many parents urge their children to try to go to special education classes at school as a way to prove that they are eligible for disability benefits.

"That shows how creative people are when there are no jobs," said Jeanne Gage, the director of the sustainable communities initiative for the Mountain Association. "You learn how to work the system."

But as the system is changing, that could have a devastating effect on Owsley County without more jobs.

Pam Barrett, 32, a divorced mother of a 17-year-old daughter and two sons, 11 and 10, is beginning to feel the pinch. Living with her 38-year-old former husband, who receives \$438 a month in disability benefits for bad nerves and a spine injury, she began working 20 hours a week at the secondhand shop two months ago. She plans to use some of the money for her daughter, Jennifer, who expects to receive an athletic scholarship and start college in the fall.

"She has the chance I passed up to have three young'uns," Ms. Barrett said. "I quit school in the eighth grade to get married. I was 15. He was 21. I've regretted it ever since. And young'uns having babies is going on right today. But I tell you what, you learn from your mistakes."

Farmers like the Hoffmans, who rely on tobacco as their leading cash crop, are enduring another anxiety, waiting to see how the litigation between cigarette companies and Federal and state governments might affect small growers.

Action team members and government officials working to turn around the fortunes of Owsley County all say their efforts are paying off, even against an enormous tide of negativism that now touches some of those who are succeeding.

Megan Hoffman said, "I have really enjoyed growing up here." But asked whether

she planned to return after college, she said: "No. There is nothing here. There is nothing to come back to."

The president of the Mountain Association, Don Harker, said that attitude would be difficult to change any time soon.

"We have an immense amount of work to do to bring up the prosperity levels of Appalachia," Mr. Harker said. "To give people hope, we have to change the whole dynamic. To give people a reason to believe things can be different than they are, we have to change their expectations."

"I know we can do it," he said. "But I don't think it will be done in my lifetime."

Mr. WELLSTONE. Madam President, I just want to read one part of the editorial today in the Star Tribune:

But since Congress passed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, better known as welfare reform, that self-regulated feature has vanished. States can kick families off assistance for many reasons—failing to find work, breaking administrative rules, or simply exhausting their benefits "clock," a time as short as 18 months in some states.

The context for this piece was that seven Midwestern welfare administrators have banded together, and they want us to ask questions about what is happening with the welfare bill in the country.

I just want to say to colleagues that we would be making a mistake if we assumed that 2 million fewer families on welfare meant also that we had 2 million fewer families that were poor in America. What the New York Times front page article points to—and I had a chance to visit Letcher County, KY, this summer—what this editorial speaks to, I think, is a really important question.

I am going to have an amendment that I am going to offer on the first bill that is appropriate which essentially says this: We cannot automatically equate reduction in caseload with reduction in poverty, and what we need to know as responsible policymakers is what is happening with these families.

When I say "these families," I am really talking about, in the main, women and children. I know that in my travels around the country—and I do no damage to the truth, I don't think I exaggerate at all—I met too many families where, as it turns out, 3- and 4-year-olds were home alone. The single parent is working now, but the child care has not been worked out. Or it is a very ad hoc child care arrangement, hardly what any of us would like for our own children, not really good developmental child care.

In addition, too many first and second graders, I said before on the floor of the Senate, are now going home alone because their single parent, the mother, is working, but there is nobody there to take care of them when they are home. First and second graders are going home sometimes in some very dangerous neighborhoods.

It is also true, Madam President, that wherever I travel, when I am told in any given State we have reduced the welfare rolls by X number of families, the question I have is, where are they?

What kind of jobs do these mothers now have? Do they pay a living wage? Where are the children? Is it decent child care? And the interesting thing is that hardly anywhere in the country do we have the data. I can't get answers to those questions.

So, the amendment that I am going to have on the floor of the Senate soon will essentially call on States to provide to Health and Human Services data, let's say, every 6 months as to how many families are actually reaching economic self-sufficiency.

I am not trying to bias the conclusion one way or the other, but since, depending on the State 3 years from now or 2 years from now or a year and a half from now or 4 years from now, there is a drop-dead date certain where all these children—women and children—will be removed from any assistance, we ought to know what is happening. That is all I am saying to colleagues, let's have the data, let's make sure we know what is happening to those families. That will be an amendment I will bring to the floor soon.

The second amendment I want to mention today is, I think, very much within the same context and, I think, important. Around the country, as I travel, I cannot believe how many women who are in a community college, who are on the path to economic self-sufficiency in school, are now being told that they have to go to work. It may be a \$5.50-an-hour job, but they are essentially told they can no longer be in school.

Madam President, I would argue that this is very shortsighted. This is very shortsighted. As a matter of fact, if these women can complete their 2 years in the community college or even get a 4-year degree, they and their families will be much better off.

So the second amendment I am going to offer will essentially call for a student exemption. It will say, let's let these welfare mothers pursue and complete their education. They and their families will be much better off. I hope that the community colleges and the universities will speak up for these families, because they know what is happening. This is, I think, a profound mistake.

#### SIERRA BLANCA

Mr. WELLSTONE. Madam President, I want to move on and talk about a related topic, in fact, very related, and this is a discussion that is urgent and long overdue. It has to do with the bill, S. 270, that would result in the dumping of low-level radioactive waste in a small, poor, majority Latino community in rural west Texas. I want to stop that from happening, not only in Sierra Blanca, but in poor minority communities all over this country.

The best way to get this conversation going, which is a conversation about environmental justice, is to make sure that the story of Sierra Blanca gets told, and it is an incredible story.

Last week, several of the people who have been telling that story for several years were here in Washington. Father Ralph Solis, who is the parish priest for Sierra Blanca, led a delegation of Texans who told us of the anger and the anguish of the people of Sierra Blanca. It is not just the people of Sierra Blanca who are organizing. Citizens from all over Texas, from cities and towns through which radioactive waste will be passing on its way to Sierra Blanca, are all demanding that their voices be heard. The newspaper columnist Molly Ivins has written that, "This is community action and local organizing at its very best." I couldn't agree more.

Let me tell you something about Sierra Blanca. It is a small town in one of the poorest areas of Texas. The average income of the people who live there is less than \$8,000 a year, and 39 percent of them live below the poverty line. Over 66 percent of the residents are Mexican American, and many speak only Spanish. It is a town that already has one of the largest sewage sludge projects in the world. Every week, 250 tons of partially treated sludge are brought to Sierra Blanca.

So why has Sierra Blanca been targeted with both a sewage sludge project and a radioactive dump? I am firmly convinced the issue here is one of environmental justice. The tragedy of Sierra Blanca is part of the larger and very disturbing pattern across the country. In far too many instances, poor people of color simply don't have the political clout to keep the pollution out of their communities. Studies by the United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice, for example, found that race was the single best predictor of the location of commercial hazardous waste facilities, and Texas was second only to California in the number of such facilities located in communities with above-average percentage of minorities. I don't think that is a coincidence.

Let me be clear about one thing, Mr. President. Sierra Blanca is not being singled out because its residents are unusually fond of waste. In April 1992, the Texas Waste Authority commissioned a telephone poll of surrounding communities, areas where the poorest residents don't even have telephones, and they found that 64 percent of the people oppose the dump. But you don't need a poll to tell you that. Just show up at any town meeting or any licensing hearing. Local residents are often angry and emotional about their community being turned into a radioactive dump. And they have every right to be.

Let us be clear about one other thing as well. Science does not explain the selection of Sierra Blanca, either. In the early 1980s, the Texas Waste Authority screened the entire State to find the most scientifically appropriate site. Their engineering consultants, Dames & Moore, concluded that the Sierra Blanca site was unsuitable for a nuclear dump because of its complex