

Partnership Act, which the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER) and I have been working on, would provide families with an affordable, accessible, and quality option for child care for our youngest children.

The bill really focuses on children between the ages of zero and six. It earmarks funds within the child care and development block grant for States to fund local education agencies which choose to provide full-day, year-round, school-based child care for children age zero to six. What we are looking for is a seamless system of childhood, early childhood education, because what we have found is that sometimes we have a child care system over here with some child care centers and lots of in-home care, and then over here we have an education institution which really does not begin until the ages of 5 or 6.

What we need to do is create, for those States that want it, complete flexibility, complete choice, the option of funding some child care in a school-based setting for a wide variety of reasons. It can be cheaper because the facilities are already provided. It can be quality, because the playground is already there and more resources can go into the care givers.

So that is why we did this work, that is why we put this bill together.

I thank the gentleman from Arkansas for all his work on this bill.

Mr. SNYDER. Mr. Speaker, I want to describe a situation in one town when I first started thinking about this idea, in Pangburn, Arkansas in White County. White County is where Harding University is, if you are familiar with that college. About 12 years ago the superintendent of the school board there decided that they had a need for child care. They had an industry there. There was no profit or nonprofit groups that had come in with child care and so they took an old building on the campus and converted it into quality child care that begins at 6 weeks. It is now a model for what can be done in a State if a school district chooses to.

I wanted to say a couple things. First of all, one of the things I like about this plan is it is completely local control. It is an elected school board that can decide to participate or not to participate in applying for these grants. Also the way we have crafted the bill, it does provide some money there that the money could be used to help build the facility, a quality child care facility.

MORE ON CHILD CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue this dialogue just a little bit longer and start with a few remarks, and then I will yield back to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER) again.

One of the things I found is that for families with more than one child, transportation issues can really be a

headache because they have got one child in school, another child going to child care somewhere else in the city or town. And if they can drop their children off at one place, life is simpler. And some school-based programs extend the use of school bus services to children participating in child care programs.

I think this is a new direction for child care and education in this country. It is not going on everywhere, but it is going on in my district in Maine. It is going on in Arkansas. It is going on in a number of places around the country. Some families, some parents tell me that when a school vacation comes or summer vacation comes, it is really hard to find a place for our kids to go. We do not want to leave them at home watching television all the time. We want someplace where they will be motivated, interested, and have some programs that are helpful to them. The programs that would be eligible under this bill are full-day, year-round programs. So they would be targeted at schools that will stay open during school vacations for the purposes of providing child care, and they will stay open during the summers for the purposes of providing child care.

Quality school-based care programs utilize existing resources in that school, such as arts supplies, sports equipment, playgrounds and so on. And it really gives school employees and social service agencies a way to enhance the quality of the programs that they provide.

I believe that school-based care makes logical sense for both school-aged children as well as preschool children. I believe firmly that if we do not deal with the issues that kids have between zero and six, if we do not pay attention to that age group, we are missing a chance to help kids get off on the right foot. What we need is the national will to leave no child behind and the resources to make that happen. I believe that a country that can support the salaries of players in the NBA and the NFL and major league baseball can take better care of its kids.

So I rise today to challenge my colleagues to commit to policies and practices that reflect the importance of those early years in a child's life. Our mission is simple: Leave no child behind.

I want to thank the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER) because the Education Child Care Partnership Act has been a partnership between our offices, and we now can look forward to having other Members of this body support it.

I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER) for concluding comments.

Mr. SNYDER. First of all, anyone involved in child care recognizes there has been tremendous work done by other entities. We do not see this as being a competition. We actually would only see school boards stepping in if there was not quality child care going on in their communities. So there is always going to be a place for

the profit-making ventures, the non-profit churches that have child care for Head Start. This is not intended at all to be competing with those. But when you have communities, particularly in rural areas, that do not have any of those options available or the options there are not meeting the need, I think this gives a community another option through their local officials with completely local control. Also just the quality aspect of it. I was visiting one school one day that had an early childhood program connected to a school building. The kids were taken down to the science lab when there was a teachers' break from other classes and these little kids, little toddlers, were getting little science demonstrations there in the high school science lab. So there are tremendous opportunities for a community to put together a program. We are intending this grant money to be start-up money to help the schools meet the needs in their communities for quality child care.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. WISE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. WISE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, Members in the Congress recently released a report, "Making Work Pay," by the Economic Policy Institute which examined the impact of the increase in the minimum wage in the 104th Congress to \$5.15.

This report was most encouraging, concluding that increasing the income of the working poor was good for them and good for the Nation's economy. These report findings give strong support for a further increase in the minimum wage. As some are aware, there is legislation to increase the minimum wage to \$6.15 an hour by the year 2000. We should consider this legislation this year.

The last increase was during the 104th Congress by 90 cents over 2 years, from \$4.25 to \$5.15. The last time the wage was increased by Congress before the 104th Congress was 1991.

Since 1991, the minimum wage remained constant while the cost of living rose 11 percent. That is the cost for food, the cost for transportation, cost for shelter and energy to heat our homes.

A single mother supporting two kids at a minimum wage makes \$10.70, \$2,600 below the poverty line. The report demonstrates that raising the minimum wage benefits primarily adult workers. The report indicates that almost three-fourths, that is 71 percent