

it is not uncommon for USDA to seek substitutes for even the most popular food items. In the early 1990s, for example, USDA temporarily suspended feeding program purchases of peanut butter because peanut prices had risen sharply. If the primary goal of the National School Lunch Program and food assistance programs is to alleviate this nation's malnutrition and hunger, it is wrong for the federal government to waste limited financial resources on buying quota peanuts to further support a small special interest group of peanut quota holders who are already subsidized by the American consumer.

Again, Mr. President, I support passage of the child nutrition reauthorization, but am disappointed in not being able to offer my amendment. I thank those that have worked so hard on its behalf. While the opportunity is not available today to offer the amendment, I have every intention of offering this proposal to relevant legislation in the future.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I rise today in support of S. 2286, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Amendments of 1998. The child nutrition programs have been critically important in helping meet the nutritional needs of our children. The bill before us, which was unanimously reported out of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, is a bipartisan effort to reauthorize and improve these successful programs. Nutrition programs in the Congress have a long history of bipartisan support and cooperation and I am pleased to report that this bill is no exception.

As an Indianapolis school board member and the city's mayor in the 1960's and 1970's, I saw firsthand the need to provide nutritional assistance to children. Since that time, the child nutrition programs have changed in many ways. Although the programs may need some fine tuning, today's programs have been successful in ensuring that our nation's children have access to nutritious foods, providing a critical nutrition safety net.

In 1997, approximately 89,000 schools enrolling 46 million children participated in the National School Lunch program. Although participation in the school breakfast program is not as large as that in the school lunch program, it has continued to grow. Since 1994, school breakfast participation has increased about 13 percent so that now over 70 percent of schools operating a school lunch program also operate a school breakfast program.

The WIC program, which provides nutritious foods and other support to lower-income infants and children (up to age 5), and pregnant, postpartum, and breast-feeding women, has been successful at reducing the number of low-birth-weight babies. Its success has led to strong support over the years. In 1997, average monthly WIC participation was 7.4 million persons. In many states, the program has reached the long sought after goal of full funding.

The bill before us makes improvements to the child nutrition programs. Recently we have seen reports on fraud and abuse in the WIC and Child and Adult Care Food Programs. S. 2286 strengthens the anti-fraud provisions in both programs. The bill requires WIC recipients to be physically present when being certified or recertified for the program. The bill also requires that recipients provide documentation of their income to prove that they are in fact eligible to participate in the program. The legislation cracks down on fraudulent vendors participating in the WIC program. Under most circumstances, WIC vendors who are convicted of trafficking will be permanently disqualified unless it can be proven that the disqualification will cause undue hardship for WIC recipients. In the Child and Adult Care Food Program, State agencies will be required to visit child care sites prior to approving participation by a provider.

The bill also makes amendments to streamline school food service operations. Specifically, S. 2286 allows schools to operate after-school snack programs through the National School Lunch Program rather than separately through the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Without this change, those schools choosing to operate an after-school program, along with the school lunch program, would have to submit paperwork for two separate programs. Streamlining these operations will free up precious time so that school food service personnel can better serve our nation's children. The bill also improves access, for low-income children up to age 18, to the after-school snack and the summer food service programs.

The bill creates a new universal school breakfast pilot program that will evaluate the effect of providing free breakfasts to elementary school children, regardless of income, on school performance and dietary intake. The new spending in this bill is fully offset by rounding down reimbursement rates to the nearest whole cent for meals served by schools and child care centers.

Finally, the bill reauthorizes the child nutrition programs through fiscal year 2003.

Mr. President, S. 2286 was unanimously reported out of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry on June 25, 1998. I urge my colleagues to support this bill, thus ensuring that our nation's children continue to have access to these important programs.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting one nomination which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

(The nomination received today is printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MEASURES REFERRED

The Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry was discharged from further consideration of the following measure which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources:

S. 2402. A bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to convey certain lands in San Juan County, New Mexico, to San Juan College.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-7008. A communication from the Executive Director of the Presidio Trust, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Management of the Presidio" (RIN3212-AA01) received on September 15, 1998; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-7009. A communication from the Executive Director of the State Justice Institute, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Institute's report under the rules of the Inspector General Act and the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act for fiscal year 1996 and 1997; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-7010. A communication from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, the Department's report entitled "Plain Language Action Plan"; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-7011. A communication from the President and the Chairman of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Center's annual report for fiscal year 1997; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

EC-7012. A communication from the Secretary of Defense, transmitting, notice of routine military retirements; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-7013. A communication from the Chief of the Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Eligible Basis Reduced by Federal Grants" (Rev. Rul. 98-49) received on September 16, 1998; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-7014. A communication from the Regulatory Policy Officer, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Commerce in Explosives" (RIN1512-AB55) received on August 28, 1998; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-7015. A communication from the Director of the Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Status of Certain Additional Over-the-Counter Drug Category II and III Active Ingredients" (Docket 98N-0636) received on September 16, 1998; to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

EC-7016. A communication from the Director of the Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services,