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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

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

Washington, DC, May 14, 2002.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN BOOZMAN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 23, 2002, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) for 5 minutes.

STATES NEED FLEXIBILITY IN WELFARE REFORM

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, we have passed welfare reform out of this body; and as a result, we are putting more people to work. Welfare rolls have been cut in half in many States. With these successes in mind, now is the time to look at what is working and what is not.

One of the biggest problems is how reform is impacting the rural areas of America. In rural America, where there are not many job opportunities, we are telling people to leave their homes and

move to the city. In rural New Mexico, many people have been tied to the land and their homes for generations. Forcing people to move is not good public policy, and it is undermining the vitality of rural America. The solution is flexibility for States to design their programs, and the solution is transportation. Transportation should be a key part of any welfare reform.

Another issue relates to the jobs people are filling. Is this the kind of employment where an individual can move up the economic ladder and support a family? Many times these are minimum-wage jobs with no real future. So we must provide meaningful job training so that an individual not only gets a job, but that that job opens the doors to better future opportunities.

Welfare recipients want to work, but they also want to take care of their children. This is the common dilemma faced by welfare parents, many of whom are single mothers with children. The last thing we should do in the name of reform is send parents to work and leave the children without adequate nurturing and care. That is why child care is a critical component of a successful welfare reform effort.

If we have learned anything in this reform effort, it is that States should have the flexibility to meet the goals of putting people to work in good jobs, while children get good quality day-care. Inner cities and rural areas face enormous challenges because frequently jobs do not exist nearby. With flexibility, States have been able to achieve big strides. Without flexibility, States will fail in these important tasks.

Unfortunately, the administration bill that the House is going to consider this week fails to recognize why we have made progress. It undercuts the flexibility of the States. It provides for rigid Federal mandates which are good political talking points, but bad public

policy. The Bush administration also fails to recognize we are in different times. In 1995 the economy was expanding. We had unprecedented job growth. Now we have high unemployment, and it is sluggish growth. It is essential that the States receive adequate resources to do the job.

The administration shortchanges these reforms at a time when State budgets are in deficit. The administration bill imposes massive new mandates and additional costs on States that cannot be met. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated the new work requirements in the bill will cost the States up to \$11 billion over 5 years. Yet this bill contains no new funding.

Governors, State legislators, mayors, welfare directors and poverty experts have all indicated that these mandates cannot be met. Forty-seven out of 47 States surveyed by the National Governor's Association indicated that the bill requires fundamental changes in their welfare programs. Why would an administration which supports States rights craft a bill with so many Federal mandates and so little State flexibility?

Just a word on how we deal with these bills. I would urge the Republican leadership to have a full and open debate on the issue of welfare reform and temporary assistance to needy families. Too many times in recent days we have taken up bills where no amendments are allowed by the minority. Many times no opposition bill is even allowed on the floor, or a motion to recommit. That is not a democratic process. It does not serve this body well. It does not serve the country well.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge the Republican leadership to bring this bill before this body under an open rule, allow full debate, and allow the House to work its will.

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

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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