

Although his professional accomplishments will long be remembered and admired, most who knew him well will remember Ted James as a hard working, dedicated, and compassionate man. I would like to extend my deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Mr. James for their profound loss.

ISSUES FACING OUR YOUNG
PEOPLE TODAY

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 1, 1999

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit for the RECORD these statements by high school students from my home State of Vermont, who were speaking at my recent town meeting on issues facing young people today.

CHILD CARE IN VERMONT

(On behalf of Jody Foster, David Verge,
Alicia Norris and Bobby Collone)

David Verge: Our issue is about child care in Vermont, and with the young people because a lot of the younger people are having kids now. According to child care funds in Vermont, a family could not afford care in 75 percent of the homes or any center. Vermont child care subsidy is at too low of a rate, only \$83.70 for field time centers, and \$67.45 for full-time care and home care. People of low income levels cannot afford even \$50 to make up the difference that the state does not pay.

If they want to come and encourage people to work or go to school, then they need to make it worthwhile. If you are working and your whole paycheck is going to the cost of day care, then what is the point of working? Youth Build needs a day care, because 11 people out of, I'd say, about 33, 30 people have kids already, and we would like if we could try to open child care round Vermont so people can get their educations, and for the people that drop out of high school, because they don't have the money to pay for child care. We would like to see more people graduate than drop out, because we have the lowest dropout rate, from what I understand, and we are just trying to fix it, because a lot of us want to become something so our kids will not look down on us and can think something of us. You know, a lot of us are just not willing to work with it, because we have no money to pay for all the child care, plus other things that we need for essential needs for babies, us, and it is really hard.

Congressman Sanders: You are doing great, Dave.

Alicia Norris: I think a lot of it is, we are all students and we all either have children or are having children. Two of us have kids already, and our whole paycheck from Youth Build goes straight to day care. I mean, we have no money for expenses, for diapers or anything else like that. And it is hard to find good day care when it is \$150 a week, and that is really expensive. That makes it really hard, because we want to go to school. And I think a lot of it is, students don't get the help they need so they can go back to school, because they are trying to better their lives and make their lives better for them and their children.

Jody Foster: Some of our changes would include maybe a special subsidy for parents that are going back to school or working,

and base it better on income levels, on a higher income level for state help for child care.

Alicia Norris: And just employers helping out their employees, to give them day care, or to either provide day care, like the hospital does, or to help with the funds for it.

Congressman Sanders: Well, you guys have touched on an enormously important subject, and you have done a great job making that presentation.

DEMOCRACY AND CHILD LABOR

(On behalf of Matt Sheldon and Emily Webster)

Matt Sheldon: My presentation is on democracy in the United States.

The U.S. system of government is not as fair as it could be. There is an elite ruling class who have too much control in the way things are run. People in the lower classes have no power. They remain in the lower class because of a concentration of power and wealth within a small area of the population.

The type of political system that the U.S. has is a representative democracy. The people elect officials to "represent" them in decision-making. These elected officials are very often corrupt and become politicians only because they have a hunger for authority.

The election process doesn't allow everyone to be represented. It costs a great deal of money for a politician to campaign. Therefore, most people in government come from the upper classes. Many of them raise funds illegally. An honest person with good ideas for change may not be able to get their voice heard because of a lack of campaign funds.

The mass media also makes it difficult for many people, because it suppresses anything that seems too radical. When a news organization decides whose campaign to cover, they may essentially be helping to decide the electee. The public only has access to certain orthodox views, so naturally, they vote for those certain people.

Many people on the left figure that a liberal leader is better than a conservative, so they vote for the liberal. But the liberals are often just as bad. They're hypocritical in many ways. Their opinions and actions are determined by the status quo. Our current president, Bill Clinton, is becoming more conservative, in that he wants to increase military spending. People like him do not really want to make the country a good place, they just crave power and fame.

Liberals are often too afraid of offending people. They are slightly critical of capitalism and make some attempts to make it better by tax reform or supporting higher wages and improved working conditions in general, but the fact remains, capitalism is a system that rests on the exploitation of humans by other humans. And the same can be said about government: As long as there is an elitist state, there will be division of classes and limited opportunity. Nonhierarchical collectivism is the only way for true liberty.

Emily Webster: I will be presenting on child labor.

Child labor is alive and well today, despite efforts by the government and the people to control and regulate it. The efforts made show that the issue of exploitative child labor has been recognized in the United States and steps have been taken to eliminate it, for progress is not being made fast enough and it is not effective enough.

Exploitative child labor has been in existence for far too long. Even though it occurs

less often in this country, it is mainly the United States-based companies that commit this abusive act. Nike is a multibillion dollar U.S.-based company. If this is so, why aren't the majority of Nike factories in this country? In order for Nike to bring in the profit that it does, the goods need to be manufactured at a very low cost. By setting up companies in other countries, mainly Third World countries, the company brings in more profits than it would if manufacturing was done in the United States.

Disney is another huge U.S.-based company. The products made by Disney are aimed for young children, and in most cases are made by young children overseas. These countries don't enforce labor laws or don't have a minimum wage, so workers don't have enough money to live even on a poverty level. In addition, the workers are abused in the factories. Oftentimes, the abuse is even sexual. If the workers try to help themselves and report their abuse, they can be fired and even blacklisted.

The U.S. is aware that Nike and Disney commit illegal acts outside this country, so why don't we act upon it? These children are not only abused, but they are denied schooling, something American children take for granted.

The most brutal of child labor is called bonded child labor. In a lot of places, the need for money is so great, the parents literally sell their children, or their children are kidnapped by companies who put them to work. They receive extremely low wages.

Though child labor is still going on, there has been a lot of progress in reducing these terrible conditions. Global Fashions, a clothing company, took its first step in improving conditions when it was discovered that exploitative child labor was being used. Global Fashions then agreed to voluntary codes of conduct to improve working conditions.

Another example of success is the Bonded Child Labor Elimination Act, sponsored by Bernie Sanders. It amends the Tariff Act, which says the products made by prisoners or adult bonded labor cannot be imported into the United States, by including products made by forced or indentured child labor.

Exploitative child labor is not only an issue about wages. It goes deeper, to the point where it turns into a life-threatening situation for many children around the world. Many people are in such desperate need for whatever money they can get that any conditions are tolerable, as long as they are getting paid. That needs to change. People everywhere deserve to be rewarded for the work they do. Children should be able to go to school and have the opportunities that most American children have. Major corporations must stop treating people as machines, but as people who have needs. Until this country can put the welfare of people all over the world before money, exploitation of children in other countries will prevail.

A TRIBUTE TO FRATERNITAS

HON. ROBERT A. BRADY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 1, 1999

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor a Fraternitas, an organization that exemplifies the proud American tradition of helping those who most need help.

In February, 1986, a group of friends in the small Abruzzi village of Castelfrentano, Italy