EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HON. ALICIA PRINCE
OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

THE SPEECH OF

TUESDAY, JULY 27, 1999

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2587) making appropriations for the government of the District of Columbia and other activities chargeable in whole or in part against revenues of said District for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes.

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the Largent amendment to H.R. 2587, which would prevent the District of Columbia from being able to place children in the foster care system in the District of Columbia in permanent homes.

There are currently over 3,000 children in the D.C. foster care system, more than 1,000 of whom are currently eligible for adoption. Many of these children have special needs and are difficult to place. No other development will have as great an impact on these children’s lives as whether they will be able to be part of a family of their own. By placing restrictions on joint adoptions, the Largent amendment lessens the chance that these 3,000 children will ever be part of a “forever family.”

The Largent amendment would also prevent child welfare workers from making decisions based on the best interests of individual children. The success of the child welfare system depends upon its ability to recognize that every waiting child has individual needs.

The Largent amendment favors the judgment of Congress over that of child welfare professionals, who are experts at determining what constitutes a safe and loving home. Child advocacy organizations across the country, including the Children’s Defense Fund and the Child Welfare League of America, also oppose this amendment and have recognized that it could endanger the future of over 3,000 children.

Mr. Chairman, no event has so profoundly transformed my own family as the adoption of my children, Kathryn and Scott. I will always transform my own family as the adoption of child welfare does not have to be a painful process. It is an opportunity for children to find a loving home and for parents to find a way to provide the right of Americans, perhaps that right needs to be restricted in terms of violence and sex.

Our proposal is that legislation be passed to more strictly enforce the age limits at movie theaters, and all television channels be required to rate their shows according to a government rating system.

Jessica Normand: Besides the media and schools, the most important influence every child has are their parents. As a society, we need to implore all parents to be involved in their children’s lives, and to track of the outside influences, whether the Internet and the harmful media we mentioned earlier.

Sarah Mayer: Kids need to understand that this isn’t a video game, it’s life, and there is no reset button.

Thank you.

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Mr. Chairman, no event has so profoundly transformed my own family as the adoption of my children, Kathryn and Scott. I will always be deeply grateful that my wife and I were able to welcome these two exceptional children into our home. The Largent amendment could prevent other families from experiencing this joy, and I urge my colleagues to oppose it.