

nail on welfare reform. And, frankly, Madam Speaker, the debate was not very civil. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle charged that Republicans wanted to kick desperate people out on the street to fend for themselves. Our opponents on welfare reform screamed that the Republicans would be responsible for countless starving people in this country. Our opponents maintained that reforming welfare would create an unmitigated social disaster.

Well, it is time to set the record straight. Americans are not starving due to the Republican insistence for welfare reform. Americans are not sleeping on park benches due to Republican insistence on welfare reform. And without question, there have been no social upheavals of any kind as a result of the Republicans' insistence to reform welfare.

In fact, quite the opposite is true. The results of Republican welfare reform have been so incredible that President Clinton has typically been taking credit for the success, despite the fact that he vetoed welfare reform twice before reluctantly signing it into law. That is right, President Clinton vetoed welfare reform not once but twice, and now he is trumpeting the success on his own and traveling around the country claiming all this success as being his success, his idea, his initiative.

Well, this tactic is nothing new. We are used to it. We have been used to it for 4½ years now. Republicans are accustomed to working hard to initiate commonsense reforms that the Democrats oppose only to watch Democrats adopt these ideas after they succeed. Democrats even tried to take credit for the budget surplus, even though everyone knows that it was the Republicans in Congress who rammed the balanced budget agreement through 2 years ago.

But the American people know better. The American people understand what separates the Republican philosophy from the Democrat philosophy. The Republican philosophy wants the government to do more with less. The Republican philosophy seeks to empower communities with more local control by freeing them from the restraints of big government spending in Washington. And the Republican philosophy places ultimate trust in the individual, who, in most cases, will succeed if he is cut free from the chain of dependence.

This stands in stark contrast to the big government philosophy of the liberal Democrats. They do not trust the strength and dedication of the average American. The Democrats do not think that individuals can succeed without the government holding their hands all throughout their life.

Well, the record speaks for itself, Madam Speaker. In the 3 years since welfare reform was passed, over 12 mil-

lion Americans have moved from welfare to work. That is 12 million Americans who have moved from dependency and despondency to independence and dignity.

By December of last year, welfare rolls had dropped by 45 percent. And that is a national average. Many of the States have much higher success rates. For example, caseloads are down by 81 percent in Idaho and over 70 percent in Wisconsin. And this is very important. Child poverty rates and overall poverty rates have declined every year since welfare was reformed. Beyond any doubt, these facts show that hope for those on welfare is found in more personal responsibility not more government bureaucracy.

So, Madam Speaker, the spirit of the American people is based on the freedom that comes from hard work and combating the odds. From the beginning of this Nation, Americans of all walks of life have fought uphill battles and won. The Republicans in Congress believe in the American spirit, and that is why we fought so hard to reform welfare reform and we should have the credit.

The President has no right to take credit. When the going gets tough, the tough get going, and the Republican Congress is responsible for welfare reform, not the President of the United States.

REVISING HISTORY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. NORTHUP). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I was constrained to rise and respond to my friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY). The gentleman revises history. On a normal night, perhaps no one would rise to say that it was revisionist history at best, or at worst, depending upon one's perspective.

In 1992, Bill Clinton ran for President of the United States, and he put forward a document called The New Covenant. Not a contract on America, a new covenant, a new promise, a new commitment, a new cooperation, a new working arrangement with America. And in that new covenant he said that, yes, we expect government to do good things for people.

Government, in my perspective, is our community at large trying to work together trying to make lives better. But in that new covenant, that my Republican friends so quickly forget, I am sure, Bill Clinton said that we need to expect of each American personal responsibility; that they will commit themselves to use their best talents to enhance their own lives because that, in turn, would enhance the lives of our community, if each and every one of us carried our share of the load.

It was the President, in 1992, who said that personal responsibility ought to be a key word for America's revival. America heard that, and America elected him. And in that new covenant as well, when he talked about personal responsibility, he said we need welfare reform. I guess the Republicans forget that.

They chuckle, Madam Speaker, but I will remind my colleagues of some history, for those who were not here, when every Democrat voted for a welfare reform bill sponsored by NATHAN DEAL. Does that name ring a bell? He was a Democrat at that time, but he had a bill that we worked on that demanded personal responsibility; the expectation that if we could, we would be expected to work, because the work ethic is critical to the success of a family, of a community, and of a society. That bill did not become law, but we had other bills.

Now, my colleagues, how many times have we all heard it complained, oh, if the President would only let us do this, we could have done great things? They know that they could not possibly have overridden the veto of the President of the United States. If he had not been committed, and if he had not led the fight for welfare reform, the Republicans could not have done it. And they know that. Period.

My friend, the majority whip, likes to say we did it, we get the credit. Very frankly, everybody in this House deserves the credit, and Americans deserve the credit, and governors deserve the credit, and State legislators deserve the credit. Why? Because we all perceived that there was a system that existed which did not encourage and have the expectation of work. But for the fact that Bill Clinton was president and led that effort, it would not have happened because he could have vetoed it. And all of my colleagues know that his veto would have been sustained because there were more than 146 Democrats in this House and more than 40 Democrats in the United States Senate.

Now, let me go on to balancing the budget. Frankly, my colleagues, what the Republican Party has been responsible for since I have been in Congress, since 1981, is the gargantuan deficits and debt that confronts our country. Period. Why? Because Ronald Reagan and George Bush proposed in their budgets those deficits.

Now, my Republican colleagues may say it is absurd that the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) would say that. Well, look at the budgets. Presidents Reagan and Bush asked for more spending in those 12 years than the Congress appropriated. Now, if they did, obviously they planned for those deficits.

Now, were the priorities slightly different? They were. But the fact of the matter is Ronald Reagan never vetoed