

Medicaid has similar broad eligibility, and it too has recorded a similar unexplained drop in its rolls. Some officials have said that while this drop, too, can be attributed partly to the economy, some may also be the result of recipients believing, inaccurately, that once they are removed from welfare rolls, they are also ineligible for Medicaid.

Ms. Watkins said there were indications from states like Wisconsin that some people leaving welfare for low-wage work are not continuing to seek food stamps that could help them make it through the month.

Her misgivings are shared by some members of Congress from both sides of the aisle.

It is becoming apparent that the welfare reforms of 1996 did not anticipate how tightly access to food stamps was linked to access to welfare, said Representative Nancy L. Johnson, Republican of Connecticut and chairwoman of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources.

"We do think there's a problem here," Mrs. Johnson said. "We need to see why state systems don't seem to capture the food-stamp eligible population very well.

"When you make a big change in one system it's going to have ramifications for other systems," Mrs. Johnson said. "Some are positive. If people aren't getting food stamps because they're making more money, that's a good thing."

She said her committee was planning to hold hearings on the matter this year.

So far analysts have been able to gauge only roughly how many eligible people have left the food stamp program even though they need the aid. Last year, for example, the Congressional Budget Office calculated that 2.9 million such people left the food stamp rolls from 1994 to 1997. The budget office report, a projection of economic conditions through 2008, proposed that the rising stigma and barriers surrounding welfare offices could be driving eligible people away.

Whatever the reasons, no one disputes how drastically the program has shrunk, both in the number of people enrolled and in the cost of providing the aid. Since 1994, the cost of the food stamp program has fallen to \$18.9 billion from \$24.5 billion, according to the Agriculture Department.

But some conservative poverty analysts say the drop in food stamp rolls does not indicate a problem. Robert Rector, who studies welfare for the Heritage Foundation, a private group in Washington, said the drop was simply a recovery from a period through the early 1990's when access to food stamps and other assistance became too easy.

"In the late 80's and early 90's you had this notion of one-stop shopping, getting people on as many benefits as you could," Mr. Rector said. "A lot of the decline now is hyped."

He said that Congress would do well to make food stamps less readily available, by instituting work requirements and other rules similar to those already imposed on other forms of assistance.

But Agriculture Department officials are pushing the states to be sure their welfare offices are in line with Federal rules, which require prompt processing of food stamp applications.

On Jan. 29, the administrator of the food stamp program, Samuel Chambers Jr., sent a letter to the commissioners of welfare and food stamp program in every state urging them to review their policies to make sure they do not violate Federal law.

Federal officials had been particularly concerned with the situation in New York City, where newly revamped welfare offices, now called job centers, were delaying food stamp

applications and often directing applicants to private food pantries instead.

After a Federal judge last month ruled that the city food stamp process violated Federal law, the city promised to change its practices.

In recent days, the city made another, unrelated policy change that city officials say will trim several thousand people from food stamp rolls. Under the 1996 package of Federal welfare changes, single able-bodied adults can be cut off from food stamps after three months if they do not work at least 20 hours a week or participate in a workfare program.

Counties can seek waivers to the work requirement if they have high unemployment rates, and for two years the counties in New York City had all sought the waivers, preserving the food aid.

This year, though, the city has chosen not to seek the waivers, so that city residents who are single and able to work must find work or lose their food stamps, said Deborah Sproles, a spokeswoman for the city Human Resources Administration.

Yesterday, private groups focused on poverty issues criticized the city's decision, saying it could put as many as 25,000 people at risk of hunger. But, Ms. Sproles said, "this is part of the city's overall effort to start helping people gain self reliance."•

TRIBUTE TO MRS. SHELBY JEAN ("JEANIE") KIRK

• Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I wish to take this opportunity to recognize and say farewell to an outstanding civil servant, Mrs. Jeanie Kirk, upon her retirement from the Department of the Navy after more than 38 years of dedicated service. Throughout her career, Mrs. Kirk has served with distinction, and it is my privilege to recognize her many accomplishments and to commend her for the superb service she has provided the United States Navy and our nation.

Mrs. Kirk's retirement on 3 May 1999 will bring to a close almost four decades of dedicated service to the United States Navy. From 1960 to 1966, Mrs. Kirk was assigned to the Navy's Personal Affairs Division. From 1966-1968, she was assigned to the Navy's Casualty Branch. For the next 31 years of her service, Mrs. Kirk was a member of the Navy Awards Branch, starting as the Assistant Branch Head in 1968 and becoming the Branch Head in 1978. Throughout her tenure, she has become a well-known and beloved figure among the fleet, from seamen to admirals, among veteran organizations, such as the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, and individuals, such as survivors of the Pearl Harbor attack. She has assisted countless individuals in tracking, reinstating or garnering appropriate awards and recognition for their service to their country, during wartime and during peace. The letters of gratitude and appreciation she has received over the years for her tireless and dogged research on behalf of thousands of sailors and their families and friends would fill many cabinet draw-

ers. Congressmen and women have benefitted from her briefings on the specific details of awards for their constituents and heeded her advice. Her opinion on Navy awards is honored as golden—decisive and accurate—in the halls of Congress as well as the Pentagon.

She is a recognized authority on the topic of Navy awards from the first Congressional Medal of Honor to the most recent new awards, such as the NATO medal, which honors the service of more than 45,000 personnel as peacekeepers in Bosnia. As the Executive Agent for the Department of Defense, she was responsible for inaugurating the Pearl Harbor Commemorative Medal to recognize the 50th Anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Mrs. Kirk has been awarded the Superior Civilian Service and Distinguished Civilian Service Awards. She is a native of Rectortown, Virginia, and currently resides in Middleburg, Virginia.

Mrs. Kirk will retire from the Department of the Navy on May 3, 1999, after thirty-eight years of dedicated service. On behalf of my colleagues, I wish Mrs. Kirk fair winds and following seas. Congratulations on an outstanding career.●

NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE

• Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, this bill calls upon the United States to take a momentous step—the deployment of a National Missile Defense system—on the basis of one, and only one criterion: technological feasibility. This bill gives no consideration to the ramifications of deploying such a system on U.S. security, political and diplomatic interests.

It is true that missile technology is proliferating more rapidly than we could have predicted. And this is of grave concern to us all. Certainly, the proliferation of ballistic missile technology constitutes a serious threat to U.S. national security. The question before us is, Will deciding today to deploy a National Missile Defense system—as yet untested, unproven and un-paid for—advance our national security interests? The answer, in my view, is that it will not.

First, I believe this bill will undermine long-term U.S. national security interests, by placing too much emphasis on just one of the many threats we face today.

While the United States is enjoying a period of relative safety and security in world affairs, we must prepare to face a multitude of diverse challenges in the international security environment in coming years. These include: transnational threats, such as terrorism and drug trafficking; the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; and the chaos of failed states, as we have seen in Somalia and the

former Yugoslavia—just to name a few. The threat from ballistic missiles is one of many.

Ballistic missiles are a threat, because they are capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction to American soil. The United States has faced this threat for decades, posed by the nuclear arsenals of the Soviet Union and China. Russia and China maintain their ability to strike American soil. But even though both nations are today struggling through a period of great uncertainty, the threat to the United States of a ballistic missile attack from either nation is low.

The threat of a missile attack from a rogue state, such as North Korea or Iran, is obviously growing. Last fall, North Korea tested its new Taepo-Dong One missile, with a range of up to 3000 km. We also know the North Koreans are developing a Taepo-Dong Two missile, which could have a range two to three times greater. Pakistan has tested a 1500 km range missile. Iran is expected to have one of similar range in the near future.

But ballistic missiles are only one means of delivering weapons of mass destruction. Nuclear weapons can be delivered in trucks, ships, and suitcases; chemical and biological weapons can be delivered through the mail, dispersed in a crowded subway, or inserted into our water supply. These methods of delivery are far simpler, less costly, and far less detectable than ballistic missiles, and they pose a much more immediate threat to U.S. security. A National Missile Defense won't protect us from these threats.

The proposed NMD system would only allow us to defend ourselves against an unsophisticated long-range missile threat with a single warhead. We would not be able to defend against a missile that carried decoys along with the warhead. Multiple objects would readily defeat the proposed system. We would have no defense against a warhead containing chemical or biological agents divided into many small "bomblets" for better dispersion. This would simply overwhelm the NMD system. The NMD system would be ineffective against cruise missiles or missiles launched from air or sea platforms.

An NMD system also has very limited use as a deterrent to the threats we currently face. In the case of a ballistic missile attack, the perpetrator is readily identified, and U.S. retaliation could be swift and devastating. That alone is a serious deterrent, a much greater deterrent than a deployed NMD system. Deploying an NMD system would simply encourage potential adversaries to develop appropriate countermeasures or to pursue other, more effective means of attack. It is exactly this logic—that an NMD system would be more destabilizing than deterrent—that underpins our commitment to the ABM Treaty.

Which brings me to my second point. I oppose this bill because it will undermine decades of U.S. leadership in international efforts to reduce the nuclear danger.

A unilateral decision by the United States to proceed with a National Missile Defense would sound the death knell for the ABM Treaty, a development that is apparently quite welcome to many of my colleagues across the aisle. This is puzzling to me, because a U.S. signal that we intend to circumvent, violate or withdraw from the ABM Treaty would almost certainly kill prospects for Russian ratification of START II. This would delay any further reductions in the large remaining Russian nuclear force, a goal we have worked for decades to achieve.

I would remind my colleagues that, in 1991, the United States—under the leadership of President George Bush—reached agreement with Russia that it would legally succeed to all international treaties of the former Soviet Union. These include the UN Charter, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, SALT/START, and others, as well as the ABM Treaty. If we refuse to recognize the validity of the ABM Treaty, we not only undermine the credibility of our past commitments to international arms control agreements—such as the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty—we also weaken U.S. leadership in future international efforts to stem the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

If we proceed with this legislation and deal a blow to international arms control efforts, we will have succeeded in fostering precisely the threats we intend to reduce. And furthermore, we can encourage this threat without ever deploying an NMD system, simply by establishing our intention to deploy an NMD system.

Finally, I have deep concerns about the technical feasibility, operational effectiveness and costs of the proposed NMD system.

I have consistently supported development of effective missile defense technology, and continue to do so. In particular, I have supported the development and deployment of effective theater missile defense systems, to protect our forces and our regional allies. But we have encountered tremendous technological challenges in trying to build defenses against these theater missile systems. We have spent billions of dollars and experienced many failures in our efforts to "hit a bullet with a bullet." The THAAD system has experienced five successive failures. Yet, THAAD is much simpler to develop than NMD.

On cost, the Administration's FY 2000 budget request calls for an additional \$6.6 billion in new funding for National Missile Defense. This would bring total FY 1999–2005 funding for NMD to \$10.5 billion. But the Defense Department

does not anticipate that we will be able to test key components of the proposed system until 2003. If we encounter problems with this system that are the least bit similar to those we have seen in testing THAAD, we can expect delays well beyond the projected deployment date of 2005—and costs far above the \$10.5 billion we are currently contemplating. And, while I have every confidence that American technological know-how will eventually produce a feasible system, I wonder: At what cost, and with how much real benefit to our national security, will this technological marvel be achieved?

In addition to the financial costs of deploying a feasible NMD system, we must also acknowledge the opportunity costs that pursuing this project will entail. America's leadership in world affairs relies on ready military forces. And the fact is, if we dedicate tens of billions of dollars to developing a National Missile Defense system, we will not be able to devote the resources and energy we should to ensuring the long-term readiness of America's fighting forces. At a time when the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff have publicly and repeatedly expressed their concerns over our ability to attract and keep bright young men and women in the U.S. armed forces, I am not convinced that we should move NMD to the top of our list of defense priorities.

With so much at stake, it would be irresponsible for us today to commit to the deployment of a National Missile Defense system, without further consideration of the implications and potential consequences of that commitment. We must not devote these resources to defending against the wrong threat with the wrong system. We must not create a world where weapons of mass destruction proliferate because arms control agreements are no longer credible. And we must not become so focused on this one defense issue that we leave our nation defenseless against other, more imminent threats.

Mr. President, this legislation poses tremendous risks to our long-term national security interests.●

RECOGNIZING MR. LUTHER'S 3RD GRADE CLASS AT BEACHWOOD ELEMENTARY

● Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I would like to recognize a truly outstanding feat by a 3rd grade class in Fort Lewis, Washington. Mr. Chris Luther's 3rd grade class at Beachwood Elementary School has not missed a spelling word on their weekly spelling tests for 25 weeks. Nearly a month ago, as my colleagues may remember, I announced an "Innovation in Education Award" program to recognize the important role individuals and communities play in the education of America's students.